Vol. V. No. 2 APRIL, 1956

TAMIL CULTURE

JOURNAL OF THE ACADEMY OF TAMIL CULTURE

CONTENTS

THE EDUCATORS OF EARLY TAMIL SOCIETY
Xavier S. Thani Nayagam 105

ALL INDIA ORIENTAL CONFERENCE, 1955
PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS—DRAVIDIAN SECTION
R. P. Sethu Pillai 120

—TAMIL SECTION
T. P. Minakshisundaram 130

OLD TAMIL, ANCIENT TAMIL AND PRIMITIVE DRAVIDIAN
Suniti Kumar Chatterji 148

THE BRAHMI INSCRIPTIONS OF SOUTH INDIA AND THE SANGAM AGE
K. K. Pillai 175

VOICED AND VOICELESS STOPS IN TAMIL
A. Subbiah 186

CILAPPADIKARAM, THE EARLIEST TAMIL EPIC
A. Chidambaranatha Chettiar 196

REVIEWS 207

NEWS AND NOTES 210

SYSTEM OF TRANSLITERATION 215

THE TAMIL SCRIPT 217

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The Educators of Early Tamil Society

XAVIER S. THANI NAYAGAM

The Sangam literature and the twin-epics represent Tamil society essentially between the years 200 B.C. and 300 A.D. The anthologies do perhaps contain poems of earlier and later periods, but that the great bulk of poetry belongs to this epoch is accepted by most scholars who have examined this body of literature. When it comes, however, to stratification of the poems contained in the anthologies on the basis of the contemporaneity of the poets and their respective patrons, or on the basis of language and grammar, or when it comes to assigning even approximate centuries and generations to them, the student is faced with some intransigent and, in the present state of evidence, insoluble problems. But the attempts at chronological stratification from different angles are all the time making the panorama of early Tamil life clearer and clearer, and reducing the obscurity which hangs over the centuries represented by this literature.

The educators of this early society are the parents, and pre-eminently also the bards, minstrels and poets; but towards the end of the period, particularly in the society reflected in the twin epics, religious teachers, Vedic Brahmins, and Jain and Buddhist monks become also the chief educators of the Tamil country. While the system in the earlier part of the Sangam epoch is secular and informal, towards the latter part of the epoch it becomes religious and formal. What is remarkable about the growth of the educational process as reflected in this literature is that it seems to correspond to the main lines of development in other ancient countries like Northern India and the Greek and Celtic worlds, and as in those countries illustrates a

normal uniform development whereby a certain type of society evolves a pattern of education in response to the social and economic needs of that particular type of society. The more numerous the societies examined, the greater is the possibility of illustrating with more examples a certain uniformity of development in the educational process among peoples.

It would seem that education originates with religious rites and songs and dances, and with prophecy and mantic poetry as may be seen by the origin of the Vedic *mantra* and the Greek *molpe*. From these religious and magical beginnings, education seems to proceed to a period of reliance on the powers of man. It becomes progressively anthropocentric, and the chief educators are those who sing the praises and the deeds of heroic men. This second stage which may be known as the bardic age of literature as of education is succeeded by a third stage in which not bards and minstrels but poets play the important part as the educators of a country. Close upon the poets come the philosophers and religious educators of a sophisticated and civilised society which represents a fourth stage in the history of education among ancient peoples. These stages of development do admit of variations in different societies but the variations are not of such a nature as to invalidate the general principles, and the stages of development have been classified according to those who were the chief educators of each epoch, though such a classification does not exclude at any given stage of growth the presence of educators characteristic of a preceding or succeeding stage.[1]

There is all over the ancient world the phenomenon of single persons being invested with multiple functions in a

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[1] See MACKENZIE, A.S., *The Evolution of Literature*, John Murray, London, 1911. This is a remarkable comparative study of literature as a social phenomenon among both primitive and civilized peoples; MURRAY, GILBERT, *The Classical Tradition in Poetry*, O.U.P., London, 1927; CORNFORD, F.M., *Principium sapientiae, the origin of Greek philosophical thought*, University Press, Cambridge, 1952; BOWRA, C.M., *Heroic Poetry*, Macmillan, London, 1952.

primitive and tribal stage of society, and as social development becomes more complex, these functions come to be distributed among different individuals. Thus in primitive society, whether Tamil or Indo-Aryan or Greek or Celtic, priesthood, prophecy, poetry, philosophy and teaching are seen to reside in one and the same individuals while later there is a differentiation of functions and persons. There is already in early society a dim association of religious, prophetic and poetic inspiration with the intuitive wisdom of the philosopher. Five types, priest, prophet, poet, philosopher and pedagogue repose in a single figure. Even today among the Tatars and other Siberian peoples, the *shamans* and *bakshas* are described as " singers, poets, musicians, diviners and doctors, the guardians of popular religious traditions and the preservers of ancient legend ".[2] This may be said also of the quasi-priests of several tribal societies not excluding the Pre-Dravidian and semi-Dravidian tribes living in India and Ceylon today.[3] G. Fraser's " Golden Bough " is perhaps one of the most comprehensive works in which this multi-functional priest-educator type may be traced in the customs of the five continents.

I. THE SHAMANS

Though the Sangam anthologies reflect predominantly a panegyric and anthropocentric age and the twin epics reflect predominantly a philosophic and didactic age, all these works do contain references to religious rites, taboos and social customs which are remains or developments of an earlier mantic period when in the priest or priestess

2 CORNFORD, F.M., *Principium sapientiae*, O.C., p. 94. Cf. CHADWICK, KERSHAW, N., *Poetry and Prophecy*, University Press, Cambridge, 1942.

3 THURSTON, EDGAR, *Omens and superstitions of Southern India*, Fisher Unwin, London, 1912; SELIGMAN, C.G., and SELIGMAN, B.Z., *The Veddas of Ceylon*, Cambridge, 1911; HAMBLY, W.D., *Origins of Education among Primitive People*, Macmillan, London, 1926; HELSER ALBERT, D., *Education of Primitive people*, Fleming H. Revell Company, New York (no date); DAWSON CHRISTOPHER, *Age of the Gods*, Sheed and Ward, London, 1933; BOAS FRANZ, *The Mind of Primitive man*, Macmillan, London, 1938.

resided multiple functions like ritual dancing, prophecy and augury. The earliest phase of Tamil society as inferred from this literature was a social organisation based on physiography with a differentiation and specialisation of functions and customs proper to each of the five regions, hunting and cultivation of wild plants in the mountain districts, pastoralism in the " bush ", rice and sugarcane cultivation in the riverine belts, and fishing, diving and sailing along the sea-coast, and plunder in the less inhabited districts. These societies which are adumbrated seem to have been of the early food-gathering type in which populations were sparse, social classes were unknown, mates were selected by freedom of choice within the regional clan, government was under local chiefs and social life was imbued with a keen sense of kinship and community.[4]

The first formal educators of these earliest societies were persons endowed with shamanistic power. Their office was neither full-time nor hereditary, but they seem to have been often elderly persons. The priest (*Kuruntogai* 53) or priestess (*Puram*; 253, 5) of Murugan, the hill-god, danced vigorously " like the gambols of herds " in an open space covered with white sand and performed the sacrificial ritual of the offering of the blood of rams, rice, roasted rice grains and red flowers. He entered into a trance as a result of his ritual ballet, and both dance and offerings were meant to appease the god and thus prevent him from afflicting people with illness and calamities (*Aham*; 22). There is also evidence for men and women and even children engaged in community religious dancing in order to obtain prosperity or to avert impending disaster. When the fisherfolk found that their nets failed to bring sufficient

[4] See JACOBS MELVILLE, *Cultures in the present world Crisis in Human Relations*, Vol. I (1947). KROEBER, A.L., *Anthropology*, London, 1948; HERSKOVITS MELVILLE, J., *Man and his works*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1949; LINTON RALPH, *The Tree of Culture*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1955. Pages 486-498 in *The Tree of Culture* present for the first time in an American book an analysis of ancient Tamil society of the Sangam period. The author has drawn from secondary sources but recognizes the value of the *Tolkappiyam* for cultural anthropology.

reward for their toils, they planted the horn of a shark and danced around it a ritual dance with offerings of flowers; when there were portents of impending disaster the shepherds and shepherdesses danced in order that the god of the flocks might avert the calamity; when marauding tribes found their cattle-wealth diminishing, they danced before their mother-goddess in order to obtain greater prosperity for their villages and more abundant plunder.[5]

Worship in its earliest recorded form was ritual dance joined with offerings both animal and vegetable, especially flowers of the region. The dances were mimetic in that the priests and priestesses imitated the action of the god and wore the insignia of the god. Sometimes a person was accoutred like the god or goddess and offerings were made before him. This custom may possibly be among later developments of the original religious dance.[6]

The priests and priestesses were also the authentic interpreters of omens and were credited with prophetic vision. Their songs and sayings were probably the earliest poetry and oral literature to which society paid any heed. For the origin of Tamil poetry from a mantic stage, there is a very interesting piece of evidence in the name given to the ancient fortune-teller who divined the future from the configuration of rice-grains spread on her winnowing-fan. Her appellation was 'akaval-makal': (அகவல் மகள்) or "the woman who calls". The word "akaval" by itself means a call, an appellative utterance, and referred in this context to the custom of the priestess calling upon the gods and spirits. This usage led to the designation given to the

5 SRINIVAS IYENGAR, P.T., *History of the Tamils*, O.C., p. 77: "The means of cure were not solely supernatural, for, as the hilly region abounded in simples, the magic of the priests and priestesses was fortified by the use of drugs. Hence the early priest was also the medicine-man and even today, notwithstanding millenia of philosophical evolution, the devil priest-*cum*-medicine-man of the degraded Kuravar tribe drives a flourishing trade among the elite of society, on the sly."

6 SRINIVAS IYENGAR, P.T., *ibid*, pp. 74—85; see also OESTERLEY, W.O.E., *The Sacred Dance*, University Press, Cambridge, 1923: JAMES, E.O., *The beginnings of Religion*, Allen and Unwin, London, 1949; BACKMAN, LOUIS, E., *Religious Dances*, Allen and Unwin, London, 1952.

earliest Tamil poetic metre which originally must have been a recitative chant like the religious chant of early ritual.[6b].

The role of these early priests and priestesses was also prophetic. In the course of their ritual ballet they entered into a trance and revealed what was occult and predicted what might happen to the tribe. The cantos describing the dances of the shepherds, of the marauding-tribe and of the mountain-folk in the epic *Silappadikaram* are reminiscences of earlier periods, and the dance and mantic declarations of Salini give us a short but illuminating indication of the importance of the seer in early regional and clan organization. Because the village of the tribe is destitute of cattle wealth and its rivals flourish, Salini dances into a trance and recommends a more martial and plundering attitude on the part of the tribe and offerings and worship to their traditional goddess. She makes mantic declarations in a voice of authority, and a people used to plunder and cruelty watch her dance and listen to her with awe. The entire canto is worth close study by an anthropologist as each word in the description of the dance may contain significance for anthropological knowledge of an ancient tribal class of which there is such early recorded evidence in literature.[7]

Vedic literature also contains pointers to a time when the priesthood had not as yet been organized into a rigid caste, and sacrifices were offered by the *paterfamilias*. Some writers are inclined to believe that there is sufficient evidence for ritual dance and mime in the *Rig-veda*. The *Atharva-veda* contains sufficient evidence for the existence of shamanism and for the power which the atharvans could have wielded with their spells, incantations and magic. The *Atharva-veda* is indicative of a society and a stage of thought more ancient than the one represented by the

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[6b] See *Patir.*, 43, 28: "அகவலன்"

[7] *Silap.*, Cantos 12, 17 and 24; see HAMBLY, W.D., *Tribal dancing and social development*, Witherby, London, 1926.

Rig-veda and is of greater anthropological interest than the *Rig-veda* itself. The atharvans, corresponding to the "magi" in Persia were the earliest shamans and teachers as revealed by Indo-Aryan sources.[8]

In Greek literature, however, the evidence for shamanism in the earliest hellenic society is not so patent. "The Greeks with their love of fact and reason, disowned the old magical chains, but they lay somewhere in the background and were connected by tradition with their first poetry."[9] The origins of Greek poetry are also intimately connected with song, music and dance. To Musaeus and Orpheus, the authors of the first poetry, are attributed magical powers. While Apollo and the Muses inspire mantic declarations, Dionysius is the inspirer of the kind of prophecy which is exercised to discover the ancient wraths of offended spirits whose vengeance causes hereditary maladies and afflictions, such as regional spirits and gods like Murugan were said to cause in the Tamil world.[10]

In Celtic society, the institution of Druidism points to an earlier period when a priestly class developed as a result of its priestly and shamanistic power. This class developed later into the intellectual class among Celtic peoples. From the evidence of classical writers like Caesar, Diodorus Siculus and Strabo it would appear that in Gaul, in Britain, in Scotland and in Ireland, the history of education began with them and that they functioned in a plural capacity as ritual officiants, poets, law-makers, judges and teachers.[11]

THE BARDS AND MINSTRELS

A second stage in the manifestation of educative impulses in early Tamil society is to be seen in the growth

8 WINTERNITZ, M., *A History of Indian Literature,* O.C., pp. 119—158; MACDONELL, ARTHUR, A., *A History of Sanskrit Literature*, pp. 191-201; Heinemann, London, 1905.

9 BOWRA, C.M., *Heroic poetry,* O.C., p. 20.

10 MURRAY GILBERT, *The classical tradition in poetry,* O.C., p. 28 ff; CORNFORD, F.M., *Principium sapientiae*, pp. 88—106.

11 SPENCE LEWIS, *The History and origins of Druidism,* Rider and Company, London, 1949.

of a hereditary class of professional singers, dancers, musicians and panegyrists known as 'pa:n:ar'. The earliest poems concerning this class point to a stage of societal evolution in which the regional culture and regional community has broken into many villages with chiefs and super-chiefs presiding over a village or over a number of villages. The Tamil names for the chiefs of the different regions are reminiscent of this period.[12]

A good few of the Puram poems are illustrative of this society in which warfare of the feud-vendetta type took place. In these poems recognition and merit are attached to physical strength and bravery, and persons who are connected with feud-vendetta for the seizure and plunder of cattle and of land are greatly eulogized, namely, the chief who leads the foray and distributes the spoils, the blacksmith who makes weapons of warfare, the potter who makes the jars for the corpses or ashes of heroes, the drummer who infuses a martial spirit and the bard who sings to the accompaniment of his lute heroic and panegyric songs in honour of his patron both in the battle-field and at home.[12b]

While a sense of community grows around the leader and chief who leads forays and distributes plunder, the bard becomes the voice of the community which expresses in song its past achievements, and its present ambitions and hopes and fears. He sings the heroic deeds of the tribe, chiefly of the leader, and thus keeps alive the spirit of bravado and bravery, and other qualities associated with a warrior especially hospitality and liberality. In the village community centre, the *mantam*, the bard entertains the members of the village with his song and music and dance, and with his accounts of the deeds of his tribe and of the warriors it has bred living and dead.[12c]

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[12] SRINIVAS IYENGAR, P.T., *History of the Tamils*, O.C., 253—300.

[12b] See G. U. POPE, *Purapporul Venbamalai*, in *Tamilian Antiquary* No. 6. pp. 45—77, Madras, 1910.

[12c] *Patir.*, 43, 26—28.

The origin of bardic poetry demonstrates a bifurcation of functions which were originally resident in the priest or priestess. Since a martial society tends to centre its ideals, thoughts, ambitions and praise around the achievements of men themselves, exclusively secular persons are needed to make them articulate for the clan and tribe. The function of the bard is both to inspire to heroism as well as to entertain, and thus for entertainment purposes he has with him his troupe of men and women and children, dancers and musicians. Bardism and minstrelsy in the Tamil country become gradually the hereditary occupation of a class of people.

The Tamil name for the professional bard is itself derived from the word "pan:" which stands for any kind of instrumental music.[12d] Instrumental accompaniment was an indispensable feature of early song and dance as in Greece. The bards were differentiated by the kind of musical instrument they played, the large lyre or the small lyre ; by the posture they adopted while singing panegyrics in court, whether they were entitled to sit or stand before their patrons ; and by the kinds of dances they performed. We have no means of assessing the number of bards or bardic troupes which existed in the period, but all evidence points to their having been numerous. Each village seems to have had its class of panars.

Many of these troupes led a wandering life in search of patrons in various parts of the Tamil country ; and they are

[12d] The common origin of early literature from dance and song is further illustrated by the early association and derivation of Tamil terms like ஆடல் (lit, movement, dance), and பாடல் (பா and ஆடல்) (song with dance). In prosody, besides அகவல், are the terms அசை (originally movement) and அடி. A number of primary activities of early society contain the word for movement *e.g.* விளையாடல் (play, creative movement) ; உண்டாட்டு (lit. dance with food and drink) ; கொண்டாடல் (feasting ; lit. to dance with someone or something) ; போராடல் (to battle) நீராடல், கடலாடல் (to bathe in stream or lake, or to bathe in the sea).

SRINIVAS IYENGAR, P.T., *History of the Ancient Tamils*, O.C., p. 16, derives pa:t:t:u (song) from pan: (instrumental music).

2

extremely important not only in the development of oral and written literature but also in the growth and popular appreciation of the Fine Arts like music and dance. Wherever they travelled they carried their different musical instruments with them, harps, lyres, flutes, horns, tambourines and cymbals. Several poems about the troupes of bards and dancers, men and women, refer to the soiled tattered clothing and lean worn-out hungry frames with which they enter the palace of a chief or king and the rich silks and sumptuous entertainment with which they are rewarded so much so that the abundance of food and drink makes them forget the very arts which procure for them a living. The gifts they received from chiefs and kings were the conventional ones of a bunch of lotuses of gold fastened together by a band of silver given to the head of the troupe, and jewels of gold given to the women. Bards and minstrels were also given gifts of elephants, horses, and chariots as well as gifts of land. These gifts may seem exaggerated, but gifts made to bards seem to have been equally wealthy and precious in panegyric and heroic ages in other parts of the world. The Huns, Celts, and Saxons were used to presents of jewels, bracelets, bags of gold, and extensive lands being given by their chiefs and kings to bards and minstrels. Princely patronage was the bard's reward for his service to the community.[13]

Through the Tamil bards and their troupes a tradition was maintained in society and in literature and the fine arts, though like all panegyrists they are mostly concerned with contemporaries, their patrons, whom they praise or whose passing away in the palace or in the foray, they lament. Almost their entire literature, even if it was recorded, has perished and what remains are probably a few eulogistic poems which were preserved in the courts of the patrons they celebrated.

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13 BOWRA, C.M., *Heroic Poetry*, O.C., pp. 404—442; CHADWICK, *The Heroic Age*, University Press, Cambridge, 1926; CHADWICK, MUNRO, H. and KERSHAW, N., *The Growth of Literature*, O.C., Vol. I.

An evolution in the role of the bard is easily traceable in these poems. He began as an individual necessary, like the drummer, to stir up the martial spirit of the clan engaged in battle and to sing the praises of the chief and the warriors when after victory they danced and drank and feasted. At a later stage song and dance became choric and musical instruments developed, and thus the bardic tradition became more organized and turned into a troupe from a hereditary class. Anonymity is generally a feature of bardic life, and the names and particulars of these bards have not been preserved, not even in colophons.

When at a later stage the poet becomes the respected personality of a more developed and literate society, music and poetry which hitherto were combined separate to a certain extent. The bard and his troupe continue with music, and song and dance, but poetry, reflective, didactic, and panegyric of a higher order becomes the property of poets. The Tamil distinguished between the bard (pa:n:ar) and the poet (pulavar) as much as the Greeks did between the bard (aoidos) and the poet (poietes), and Indo-Aryan society between the bard (suta) and the poet (kavi).[14]

The bards were so prominent and numerous members of early society and were so identified with panegyrics, that in subsequent development when poets compose panegyrics in praise of kings and chiefs they do so in a " bardic convention ", as if a bard were praising the hero of the poem. The *a:ttuppat:ai* is such a situation where the poet imagines a bard who has received bounteous gifts for himself and his troupe encountering a similar band of minstrels in search for a patron, and recounts to them the reception and wealth his troupe received from a particular king or chief and recommends his fellow-bards to betake themselves to

14 MURRAY, GILBERT, *The classical tradition*, O.C., p. 46. Cf. SINCLAIR, T.A., *A History of classical Greek Literature*, pp. 4—9; Routledge, London, 1934.

the same patron. The following is a short poem composed in a bardic convention by a poet :

> Ministrel, with little lute of sweetest strain !
>
> Suppliant with words of wisdom full !
>
> Importunate thou askest me to rest and listen to the pleasant sounds of thy tambourine.
>
> But hear what I shall say !
>
> The modest homes of Pan:n:an, whose hands are full of gifts, is near the wide city ....
>
> If thither,—together with thy songstress, whose hair diffuses fragrance of the 'trumpet-flower', the brightbrowed, sweetly smiling,—you softly advance, you shall prosper well.
>
> His gifts are not mere chance, like gold found by the woodman in the forest.
>
> Hesitate not.
>
> Long may he flourish. (*Pur* : 70.)[15]

The bards being panegyrists by profession were extremely skilled in the use of words, and when poets gained ascendancy in society their institution degenerated in certain ways. They are used in the poems of a subsequent stage of development as conventional pimps and as companions to young men in love, obviously because of their gifts of persuasive speech. A poem in the *kuruntogai* expresses the marvel of a damsel at a bardic messenger's flow of language which she argued should be far more copious in his own village if he could be so eloquent before strangers in a strange place. (*Kuruntogai* ; 33). The expression " youthful student " (இளம் மாணாக்கன்) used in this poem is significant as one of the rare examples in Sangam literature of evidence for formal studentship.[16] For the same competence in language, the bards were used by chiefs and kings to carry messages from the battlefield or camp to their queens in the palace.

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[15] POPE, G.U., *The Four hundred Lyrics in the Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XXIX, (1900), p. 281.

[16] Kur., 33, 1—2 :

அன்னா யிவனோ ரிளமாணாக்கன்
தன்னூர் மன்றத் தென்னன் கொல்லோ

It is significant that women constituted an integral part of the bard's troupe, and that they were the principal singers and dancers at the performances in courts and village community centres in programmes of entertainment. They do not appear to have been panegyrists directly apostrophizing the patrons of the band. Transmission of the arts within the class was easy since entire families, children included, went from chief to chief, and kingdom to kingdom, entertaining the villages on their way and receiving their hospitality. Their diverse musical instruments they carried with them protecting them in cases sewn of thick cloth.

Tamil society did not have in its early stages religious traditions of the kind Indo-Aryan society had. Along with the religious tradition in Indo-Aryan society there grew *pari passu* a secular tradition. The *Rigveda* contains a kind of panegyric poetry in the praise for gifts (*da:nastutis*). The *Brahmanas* contain songs in praise of men (ga:tha: na:ra:samsi) which are laudatory as their title indicate. Further at the time of the Buddha himself, there were already a large store of narratives in prose and verse. All this secular literature in pre-Buddhist India is evidence of a twin tradition, one mantra or religious and the other suta or bardic.[17] It is from Sanskrit bardic literature that the two epics, *Ramayana* and *Mahabharatha,* took shape and form.

The sutas were the charioteers of chiefs and accompanied the chiefs to battle. They sang the praises of their chiefs both in war and peace and they formed part of the court. The role sutas played in the courts were played by

17 WINTERNITZ, M., *A History of Indian Literature*, O.C., Vol. I, pp. 311—316; MAJUMDAR, R.C., ed., *The Age of Imperial Unity*. pp. 243—245, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1951; DANDEKAR, R.N., *The Mahabharata: origin and growth* in *University of Ceylon Review*, Vol. XII, (1954), pp. 65—85. Page 65: "In the history of Indological studies there has always been evident a tendency to exaggerate the importance of the Vedic Aryan element in India's culture complex". Page 75: "I believe that, in a sense, the beginnings of the Mahabharata, viewed as a whole, have to be traced back, both from the points of view of cultural history and literary history to a period before the Vedic samhitas came into existence".

wandering minstrels and singers (*Kusilavas* and *Magadhas*) among ordinary people. The *Mahabharatha* presents Sanjaya the suta, describing the battle-scenes to Dhirtarashtra ; and Kusa and Lava, the two sons of Rama, are said to have wandered from place to place singing in assemblies the tale of Rama they had heard from Valmiki.

The sutas like the magadhas formed a separate caste in Aryan-speaking India. According to the lawbook of Manu, the sutas are represented as a mixed caste originating from the union of kshatriya warriors and brahman women, and the magadhas as the offspring of inter-marriages of vaisyas with kshatriya women. Originally, says Winternitz, the magadhas were bards from the land of Magadha and the sutas were bards from a country situated to the east of Magadha. Hence there is room to surmise that this bardic tradition in Northern India may have received its greatest strength from non-Aryan sources, especially so as the ariyanisation of Magadha and neighbouring provinces had not been accomplished at the time the earlier mantra literature was composed.

In Greece also education both among princes and people evolved along similar lines. The original religious lyric and dance gave birth to man-centred arts of which the bards surrounded by their choruses of women, were the chief exponents. Homer himself refers to bards older than himself, and even if Musaeus and Orpheus seem legendary, there is no doubt that Homeric poetry was preceded by the poetry of wandering and minstrels, some of whom may have been blind, who took to professional singing and recitation at courts and at festivals. After Homer, a guild of bards called Homeridae or "sons of Homer" existed at Chios who professed to popularise Homer's compositions. When Homer became the "educator of Greece", the rhapsodes mostly made dramatic recitations of Homeric epics.[18] A certain decline in the nature of minstrelsy and

[18] MARROU, H.I., *Histoire de l'Education dans l'Antiquite*, p. 34, Editions du seuil, Paris, 1950.

the importance of the rhapsodes synchronises also in Greece with the increase of the social prestige of poets, sophists and philosophers. Plato's *Ion* is a revealing dialogue on the nature, popularity and artificiality of the rhapsode's calling during the classical period.

The place of the minstrel and bard as popular educators, and in some societies as formal educators, is made clear again by the study of educational factors among Celtic and Teutonic peoples. In Pre-Christian Ireland, for instance, instruction was not only in the hands of druids, but also of the *filidh* or bards. They were generally peripatetic, teaching in the open air, and the profession seems to have become hereditary among certain families. Both the chiefs and the agricultural population had to support these bards and their pupils. They were so numerous that the people resented their privileges. Their influence became more systematized when bardic schools were organized in each chieftaincy.[19] Wandering minstrels and the troubadours are the persons to whom the beginnings of literatures in the Romance tongues are attributed. The minstrel and bard have been studied by critics and historians of literature but their role as educators deserves greater notice in histories of the education of early societies.

(To be continued)

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19 EDGAR JOHN, *History of Early Scottish Education*, Edinburgh. 1893, p. 23: "The bard or minstrel shares with the priest the honour of being the first teacher of a nation;" HAARHOFF THEODORE, *Schools of Gaul*, O.U.P., London, 1920; AUCHMUTY, J.J., *Irish Education*, Harrap, London, 1937.

All India Oriental Conference, 1955

Presidential Addresses*

DRAVIDIAN SECTION

R. P. SETHU PILLAI.

The All-India Oriental Conference is held at the Annamalai University which was established, nearly a quarter of a century ago, for promoting the cause of University Education in general and of Dravidian culture and literature in particular. The people of Tamil Nad look upon this University with legitimate pride as a centre of learning, specialising in South Indian literature and culture.

Great changes are taking place in our political and educational affairs at present. The States Re-organization Commission, set up by the Central Government, has submitted a momentous report, and there is little doubt that most of its recommendations will be implemented at an early date. In the new set-up, it may be confidently stated that the regional languages of India will receive the consideration and support that they deserve. Sooner or later the regional languages will become the language of administration in the State and the medium of instruction in the Universities situated within the State. The observations of Sri B. G. Kher, Chairman of the Official Language

* This Conference was held at Annamalainagar under the auspices of the Annamalai University and the main Session was presided over by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, the Vice-President of India. The Presidential addresses of the Dravidian and Tamil Sections are reproduced here as they would be of interest to readers of *Tamil Culture*.— (Editor).

Commission, in the address delivered by him at the Autumn School of Linguistics in Poona in October 1955, clearly reflect the aspirations of millions of people in this country. He says: "The fourteen languages mentioned in the Constitution of India have an enormous wealth of literature and a literary tradition going back several centuries, and in the case of some of them more than 2,000 years. Intrinsically, I believe, each of these languages is fully capable of expressing the most complex or abstruse thought, notion or shade of meaning. Mahatma Gandhi with his astonishing insight into the fundamentals of controversial issues said as long ago as 1928 that there never was a greater superstition than that a particular language can be incapable of expansion or expressing abstruse or scientific ideas."

The dawn of Independence in India has raised great expectations in the minds of the people regarding the regeneration of the regional languages. It has been authoritatively declared that all the fourteen languages enumerated in the Constitution are national languages, and that Hindi is the official language of India. The Government of India have realized the paramount importance of promoting the interests of all these languages. They have constituted the Sahitya Akademi in Delhi to achieve this object. It was declared by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan on the occasion of its inauguration that 'it is the purpose of this Akademi to recognise men of achievement in letters, to encourage men of promise in letters, to educate public taste and to approve standards of literature and literary criticism.' In pursuance of this policy the Government of India awarded a cash prize of Rs. 5,000 each, to the most outstanding book, in twelve out of the fourteen Indian languages, published after the advent of Independence. The Government have also made, on the recommendations of the Sahitya Akademi, a grant of Rs. 15,000 to a distinguished Malayalam poet to enable him to publish his translation of the Rig Veda into Malayalam.

It is the policy of the Akademi to co-ordinate the literary activities in the various languages of India in order to promote its cultural unity. As Sardar Panikkar said, 'It will easily be granted that in a country in which fourteen languages, each with a long history and a growing literature, are recognised, it is of vital national importance that their development should be co-ordinated with a view to promoting the cultural unity of India. With this object the Sahitya Akademi has set up an Advisory Board for each of the languages and the programme of the Akademi has been so framed as to foster better mutual acquaintance and understanding between writers in the different languages of our country. The foremost item of the programme is the preparation of a Bibliography of Indian Literature. The compilation of Bibliographies in the four main Dravidian Languages is in progress and the work has been entrusted to competent scholars or institutions. These Bibliographies will be very useful sources of information regarding the books published in the first half of the present century.

The Sahitya Akademi has also decided to sponsor the publication of 'The History and Development of Modern Indian Literatures', which will be originally written either in the language concerned or in English, and would then be translated into Hindi and other Indian languages. At the request of the UNESCO, a list of classics in all the Indian languages suitable for translation in English and other European languages is being prepared by the Akademi. The Advisory Board for Tamil has recommended that selections from Kambaramayanam may be translated into English and other Indian languages.

It is a matter of gratification that historical and linguistic research in recent years has laid greater emphasis than ever before, on the Dravidian contribution to Indian culture. Prof. S. K. Chatterjee says that "in culture, speaking in the Indian way, one may say that over twelve annas in the rupee is of non-Aryan origin," meaning thereby that more

than three-fourths of Indian culture is non-Aryan and predominantly Dravidian. Western savants are beginning to realize that the Dravidian element in the Sanskrit vocabulary is certainly more than what was admitted by the scholars of an earlier generation. The question of Dravidian loan-words in Indo-Aryan has attracted the attention of linguists in recent years. Dr. Caldwell, Kittel and Gundert were the pioneers in this line of investigation. Dr. S. K. Chatterjee pursued the subject and gave a list of Dravidian words in Vedic and later Sanskrit in the introduction to his book entitled "The Origin and Development of the Bengali Language." Some years ago Mr. Burrow, Professor of Sanskrit in the University of Oxford, has published some articles on the Dravidian words in Sanskrit and set forth the criteria for identifying such words. The need for philological research in the Dravidian languages is being increasingly recognized by the Madras and Annamalai Universities. A 'Dravidian Comparative Vocabulary' setting forth the primary words common to the five principal languages commonly known as Dravidian, namely Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Kanarese and Tulu is being printed by the Madras University. The Annamalai University has decided to utilize the grant of three lakhs of rupees graciously made by the Government of India on the occasion of its Silver Jubilee to the creation of a Department in 'Dravidian Philology.' It is understood that the compilation of an 'Etymological Dictionary of Tamil' will be one of its main activities. Besides these Universities, an Academy of Tamil Culture has been recently started in Madras for fostering scientific research in the Tamil language, and a quarterly review entitled 'Tamil Culture' is published by this Academy in English. The Deccan College in Poona has given an impetus to the study of Philology by organizing Schools of Linguistics under the grant received from the Rockefeller Foundation of New York. During the last two years, three conferences have been held in which a large number of schools from different parts of India representing the regional languages, have partici-

pated. The Deccan College has rendered a great service to the Dravidian languages by bringing out an English version of the 'Grammatical Structure of Dravidian Languages' by Jules Bloch. Prof. Bloch was one of the most sagacious of linguists produced by France and his contributions have always tended to inspire our scholars to similar achievements. The inter-relationship of Dravidian and Indo-Aryan and *vice versa* was a subject of abiding interest to him. His demise on the 29th November, 1953 is a great loss to the world of Dravidian Philology. The Deccan College has also published 'A Historical Grammar of Old Kannada' by G. S. Gai and 'The Evolution of Malayalam' by A. C. Sekhar. Mr. B. Emeneau, Professor of Sanskrit, University of California, made a field study of the language of the Kotas in the Nilgri Hills and published a grammar of the Kota language.

In the field of literature a great deal of interest is evinced in India and elsewhere, in the study of the Sacred Kural which holds a unique place in Tamil literature. The great savant Albert Schweitzer says: "There hardly exists in the literature of the world a collection of maxims in which we find so much of lofty wisdom." Several commentaries were written on this work by eminent scholars, but only a few of them exist at present. All the available commentaries have been collected and published as a variorum edition of the Kural by the Dharmapuram Adhinam in South India. An English commentary on some of the maxims of the Kural was published nearly a hundred years go by F. W. Ellis of the Madras Civil Service. This valuable commentary which was not available for several decades, has been re-printed by the University of Madras. The latest translation of the Kural in English is by Prof. Chakravarti of Madras. He is a Jain scholar and his commentary has been written from the Jaina point of view. It is his opinion that the doctrine of Ahimsa which is fundamental in the Jaina religion, is the bed-rock on which the structure of the Kural is raised. It is interesting to note

that the Kural has been translated into several Indian languages. Nearly thirty years ago, it was translated into Sanskrit by Appa Vajapaiyan, a descendant of the well-known Appayya Dikshitar. The translation is entitled "Suniti Kusuma Mala", i.e., 'A Garland of the Flowers of Good Morals.' Translations of the Kural have been published in Hindi in recent years. Prof. B. D. Jain of the Banaras University has rendered it into Hindi in three parts at the instance of the Head of the Tiruppanandal Mutt in South India. Another translation of the Kural is entitled "Tamil Veda" and the author of it is Kshemanand Rahat, and published by the Sahitya Mandal in 1950. The translation is in simple prose and covers eighty-nine chapters of the Kural. There is also a Bengali translation of the *Kural* (made from the English Translation by Sri V. V. S. Ayyar) by the late Dr. Nalini Mohan Sanyal, with an introduction by Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterji.

This great ethical work has been rendered into the Dravidian languages as well. In Telugu, Venkata Rama Vidyananda, who lived for nearly ninety-five years in the last century, translated it under the caption 'Trivarga Deepika." Dharma, Artha and Kama which are the Sanskrit equivalents of the Tamil Aram, Porul and Inbam are denoted by the word 'Trivarga'. The author lived only to complete the first two parts of the work. It is a metrical translation and contains an introduction on the life of the author. In Kannada the Kural has been translated by Sri R. Narasimhacharya under the title "Neetimanjari". In Malayalam, the Kural was translated nearly three centuries ago by Ravi Varma who is said to be a Kaviraya. His translation covers the whole work. Recently Sri Parameswaran Pillai has brought out a Malayalam commentary of the Kural under the title 'Ratna-Uddharakam'. He omitted the third part dealing with Kama, as there was already abundant literature on the subject in Malayalam.

The highest place in epic literature is assigned to Kambaramayanam in Tamil. Although the work is very popular in the Tamil country, there is no authentic edition of it. The Annamalai University has undertaken to produce a definitive edition and the first part of Sundarakandam was released on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee of the University. A thousand poems of this epic were translated into English by Sri V. V. S. Ayyar and the Tamil Sangam at Delhi has recently published the translation. The Kambar Kazhakam in Madras has taken up the work of translating two thousand stanzas of Kambaramayanam and a few selected stanzas from the first two books have been recently published under the caption "Leaves from Kambaramayanam". At the instance of the Sahitya Akademi an English translation of selections from Kambaramayanam by Sri Rajagopalachari has been recommended to the UNESCO for publication. In Telugu this great work has been translated by two scholars. The translation of Somanathakavi of Kakinada is still in manuscript and Sri Ramulu Reddi's translation has been published. These translations are said to be elegant and accurate.

There is at present a revival of Tamil learning in the Madras State. The general public are taking a keen interest in the study of Tamil classical literature. There is a general desire that cultural words found in the ancient classics should be resuscitated for enriching the vocabulary of the modern languages. For instance the word for the 'light-house' in classical Tamil is 'Kalam Karai Vilakku'. The existence of this word was not generally known before the Sangam classics were published. Therefore, in the text books written in the last century the word 'Deepastambam' was used to denote the light house. But now not only the scholars, but even popular journals in Tamil are using the word 'Kalam Karai Vilakku'. The market was called 'Angadi' in ancient times. Silappadhikaram, the Epic of the Anklet, speaks of a day-market and night-market, which flourished in the capital city of the ancient Chola

country. 'Nalangadi' is day-market and 'Allangadi' is night-market. But the word 'Angadi' became obsolete and the Persian word 'bazaar' and English word 'market' have taken its place. Now there is a tendency to revive the classical word 'Angadi' which is current in all the other Dravidian languages.

In Telugu the desi types of poetry are becoming increasingly popular. The distinguishing feature of the desi is that it is based on Matra chandas and, therefore, more suitable for singing. Much of this poetry is centuries old. It was not committed to writing, but handed down by memory from generation to generation. In this connection the songs of the Tallapaka poets of Tirupati deserve special mention. They were a family of devotees of Sri Venkateswara in the 15th and 16th centuries. They composed thousands of verses in desi metres in praise of the Lord, and they were fortunately preserved for posterity in copper plates. They were discovered a few years ago and the Tirupati Devasthanam has undertaken to publish these songs and appointed a competent scholar to edit them with proper musical notation. A dissertation on the 'Desi in South Indian Languages and Literatures' was published by Sri K. Ramakrishnayya in 1949. In this work an attempt has been made to deal with the various desi types of Dravidian prosody.

In the Tamil country an impetus to the revival of ancient music was given by Rajah Sir Annamalai Chettiar, the founder of the Annamalai University. Nearly twelve years ago he started the Tamil Isai Movement with a view to popularising the ancient system of Tamil music and establishing it on a scientific basis. An important feature of this movement is the institution of researches in the devotional hymns known as Tevaram and Tiruppukal. The custodians of the ancient classical Tamil tunes known as 'Othuvars' are being invited year after year to the annual conference held in Madras to give practical demon-

strations of the Ragas and Talas pertaining to the ancient hymns, so that the identity of tunes between the ancient music and Karnatic music of the present day could be established. " The history of the Tamil Isai Movement ", says Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, " has emphasized the uniqueness of the special contribution made by the Tamil language and literature to that composite culture of India whose marvellous and age-long trait is its ability to absorb, to assimilate and to reconcile its several composite elements ".

The stupendous task of producing an encyclopaedia has been undertaken in two of the Dravidian languages. The Tamil Academy known as ' Tamil Valarchi Kazhakam ' has published so far two volumes of the work under the caption ' Kalaikkalanciam '. The object of this endeavour is to bring within the reach of the average educated Tamilian all modern knowledge in humanities and sciences. Tamil equivalents for nearly thirty thousand words relating to technical and scientific subjects have been settled by expert committees, and these terms have been used in the articles contributed to the encyclopaedia. The Academy hopes to bring out the remaining eight volumes in the course of the next four or five years. The Telugu Bhasha Samiti has produced two volumes, the first dealing with history and politics and the next with physical science.

The question of adopting Tamil as the medium of instruction in the University of Madras, is engaging the attention of the State Government and the University. A Committee of Experts has been recently constituted by the Government of Madras to devise ways and means of producing a suitable terminology in subjects relating to science and the humanities. It is hoped that under the guidance of the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Madras who is its Chairman, and the co-operation of the experts in various subjects, it will be possible to achieve the object of adopting Tamil as the medium of instruction as early as possible.

It is expected that the Annamalai University which is essentially a Tamil University will take the lead in this matter.

It was brought to the notice of the Government of India a few years back by the Vice-Chancellor of the Annamalai University that some of the ancient capital cities of the Tamil country lie buried in the Coromandal Coast and elsewhere, and that these historic sites should be excavated in the interest of Indian history and culture. The city known as Kaveripumpattinam was, once upon a time, a great emporium of commerce and its splendour is portrayed in the ancient Tamil poems. A good part of this city is now submerged, and hence the excavation will involve underwater exploration. Similarly the ancient sea-port city of the Pandya country known as Korkai which is mentioned by Ptolemy as a great centre of commerce, is now a petty village on the sea-coast in the Tirunelveli District. Excavations at these sites may be expected to tell a story as interesting as that of the Indus Valley.

The French Government at Pondicherry started publishing the Diary of Anandaranga Pillai who was a distinguished Dubash and Courtier at the time of Dupleix. The historical importance of the Diary as a record of contemporary events is fully recognised, and the work has been translated into English and French. But the original Diary maintained in Tamil remained unpublished till recently. The French Government has brought out four out of twelve volumes. But the execution of the work is unsatisfactory. The Diary is important not only to the student of South Indian History, but also to the student of the Tamil language. It is written in the colloquial dialect and the vocabulary of the spoken language is preserved in it. Now that Pondicherry is merged in the Indian Republic, it must be possible for the State Government of Madras or the Government of India to undertake the publication of this useful work in a satisfactory manner.

There is little doubt that before the next session of the Oriental Conference, the formation of linguistic states in South India will become an accomplished fact. I hope and trust that the four principal states in South India will be linguistically united, working for the common cause of Indian Culture.

TAMIL SECTION

T. P. MINAKSHISUNDARAM.

Inspired by your presence, my mind goes back to those ancient days and of Rishis of whom the Puranas sing, when Chidambaram was, according to them, the heart of the Universe wherein dances the Lord. Today, Chidambaram as Annamalainagar is the centre of Tamilnad because of this University founded for the study, development and popularisation of all that is best in the Tamil country. Our merchants of ancient time carried our culture to the distant countries of the world and were responsible for many religious and cultural institutions. True to this tradition, the Merchant Prince, Rajah Sir Annamalai Chettiar of Tamil Nad founded this cultural centre, the Annamalai University whose traditions are kept alive by his son Rajah Sir Muthiah Chettiar and the present Vice-Chancellor Sri T. M. Narayanaswamy Pillai. That unique Tamilian spirit of loving hospitality is the very atmosphere of this University, an atmosphere whose presence you must all have felt and enjoyed.

I am glad that a Tamil section has been organised this year and I must express the gratitude of all the Tamilians, however unworthy I may be, as their mouthpiece. It was your love for Tamil, more than my individual merit that was responsible for choosing me to occupy the privileged position of a President of this section, and this brings to my mind the sad thought that most of the stars of the first

magnitude on the horizon of Tamil studies had set. May we pay our humble homage in loving remembrance to those departed souls ;—Dr. Swaminatha Iyer, Swami Vipulanantha, Vellakkal Subramaniya Mudaliar, K. Subramaniya Pillai, Marai Malai Atikal, Pandithamani, T. K. Chidambaranatha Mudaliar, and Kavimani Desikavinayakam Pillai, with whom all I had the good fortune to come into intimate contact as a lover of Tamil. This thought makes us realise our responsibility, in keeping up their torch of learning ever burning bright, till we hand it over to the next generation in this great race between ever fleeting time and the tardy human achievement.

May I in all humility suggest that this Tamil Section may be a permanent feature of the subsequent sessions of our Oriental Conference. Tamil has two aspects, the one as a Modern Language and the other as a Classical language. Our revered and beloved Minister for Education at the centre, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, inaugurating the Conference of Letters on 15th March, 1951, which met for the establishment of the Academy of Letters or the Sahitya Akademi as it is now called, emphasised this truth which is very often either neglected or forgotten. " The fourteen languages recognised by the Constitution ", he then said, " include Sanskrit and Tamil. Sanskrit is of course in a class by itself and is rightly recognised as one of the most developed of classical languages. Tamil also has a rich and ancient literature and its poetry has deservedly to be translated into foreign languages. We must, however, remember that Tamil is really a *classical language* and most of the achievements of Tamil, which entitle it to recognition, belong to a past age." My appeal is only to give effect to this recognition and if this Oriental Conference of Scholars is not going to give this recognition, who else would ?

This is not to minimise the importance of Tamil as a modern language—its present vitality and its future possibi-

lity. A language with journals older than the present century, and with circulation reaching very often a hundred thousand, a language which has produced the modern miracle in the East of an Encyclopaedia of modern knowledge in Tamil, a language which had given birth to Bharathi, the poet of the national awakening, Kavimani, the poet of the child and the common man, Thiru. V.K. the great orator and the father of Modern Prose, T.K.C. the creator of literary appreciation, Kalki, the humourist and the historical novelist, Sir R. K. Shanmukham Chettiar, the great exponent of political and administrative thoughts in Tamil, not to speak of his literary and scientific expositions, Putumai-p-pittan, the short story writer, and E. T. Rajeswari, the exponent of popular Science can justify its claim as one of the best languages of the East, especially when it is seen that I have restricted my attention to only those who are, unfortunately for us, not with us anymore, and that the race of writers is multiplying in number and power, fame and prestige. These cannot escape the notice of the world.

But in an Oriental Conference, it is the aspect of our classical learning that has to be kept alive. First is therefore the task of rescuing the ancient classics. Damodaram Pillai and Swaminatha Iyer can never be forgotten for their bequethal to prosperity of their valuable editions of Tolkappiyam and Sangam and other works. The three Universities of the South, the Madras, the Annamalai and the Travancore, the two great public libraries, the Madras Oriental and the Tanjore Saraswathi Mahal and the great religious mutts of Tamil land, the Dharmapuram, Tiruppanandal and Thiruvavaduturai are all now issuing editions of old Tamil Works. The old manuscripts used by Dr. Swaminatha Iyer and others are fortunately still available. It is very unfortunate that provision had not been made for taking mechanical copies, which alone will avoid the personal equation in copying and will make copies available to the students of Colleges and other Scholars without

much cost, copies which can be read conveniently in a magnified form, with the help of illuminated readers. The last word is yet to be said about the editions of the old texts. The Scientific method of editing the old manuscripts evolved by the editors of the West and the East has to be followed ; and for an understanding of this method and practice, the mechanical copies must become available to all the students. Perhaps, the reading and editing of old texts from manuscripts, along with the study of Paleography for reading and editing the inscriptions, may be made one of the special or optional subjects in a Tamil Honours course. A well framed Syllabus providing for practical work will help the students to bring out scientifically prepared editions of the old texts, commentaries and inscriptions. There are manuscripts in Tamil of probably the 12th century in Tibet. Perhaps there are old manuscripts and books in the libraries of the West. There are various commentaries on Tolkappiyam and other grammatical works in Tamil which unfortunately have not till now been taken for publication by the manuscript libraries in our State that have a scheme of publication. There is also enough of lexicon matter which if published will help the preparation of a historical dictionary.

The Tamil lexicon prepared by the Madras University is an important land mark and it was not and could not have been, drawn on historical principles. It had not even attempted to arrange the meanings listed therein, roughly at least, according to the relative-age of the various works, from which it quotes. The Government of India is sponsoring the preparation and publication of a Sanskrit dictionary on historical principles, and this has been made possible by the various dictionaries including the Comparative Dictionary of the Indo-European which have been published from time to time. A historical dictionary of Tamil language is equally necessary. It is learnt that Prof. Burrow of England and Prof. Emeneau of America are going to work on an etymological dictionary of the Dravidian

Languages. The study of the unrecorded Dravidian languages—the so-called uncultured dialects is very important from this point of view. Prof. Burrow's study of the Parji language and Prof. Emeneau's study of the Kota text and the Kolami language are master-pieces in this line. In his work on the Kolami, Prof. Emeneau has given us an idea of the projected etymological dictionary of the Dravidian languages. It is very unfortunate that whilst foreigners are evincing such great interest in these languages and mastering them, the native-born speakers of Dravidian Languages do not make a serious study of its sister languages with the inevitable result, that the study of the Comparative Dravidian remains stagnant where Dr. Caldwell left it nearly a century back, except for a few attempts here and there, inside and outside India. The Southern Universities along with the University of Ceylon and the University of Malaya, can easily co-operate in this project of a comparative study. Speaking from the point of view of a Tamilian, except in the commercial circles, linguists are not very many. The cheap but highly strained emotional controversy about the linguistic problem in the South, seems to cloud the issue and kindle an unwanted and unwarranted prejudice against the study of other languages.

The unwritten languages have also to be studied for an understanding of the various problems of Tamil. In a paper to be read before this session on the Conjugation of the Tamil Verbs, attempting to explain forms like cenraan (சென்றான்), the contributor suggests that the root here must have been originally) cen (சென்) which became cel (செல்) due to the denasalisation of the ending—a process which is amply proved by en (என்) becoming el (எள்) an (ஆன்) becoming al (ஆல்) and in (இன்) becoming il (இல்). But this must have taken place long before the age of Tolkappiyam and the Sangam works which use the forms like Celavu. A study of the Kolami language proves the existence of this nasal ending ; for the root there is

even today, cen (சென்). Once again this contributor, explaining the infinitive in Tamil finds some forms like nirka (நிற்க) and nirpa (நிற்ப) which cannot be explained away as a combination of the root and the suffix "a", if one were to take the root as nil (நில்) according to the established Tamil usage. The contributor refers to the Malayalam usage, where nilkku (நில்க்கு) is taken as the root. The unwritten dialects throw a flood of light. In the Parji language *nilp* is the root and in its northern dialect this takes the form *nilk,* thus completely explaining, the two forms nirka and nirpa as forms existing in two different dialects. Dr. Caldwell traces the original meaning of suffixes like the negative il, al etc. on the assumption, that the forms in Tamil are the original or primitive forms. Are they the real primeval forms ?—that is the question. In the unwritten languages, we find the negative particle il (இல்) as kil and cil. in Kolami and Sid in Kui. At a particular period in the history of Tamil Language, the initial 'e' was lost, which gives therefore the Tamil form il for kil and cil. This explains the futility of building any theory on the forms found in the cultured languages alone, in the absence of a detailed and comparative study of the unwritten languages and dialects.

The history of Tamil Language can be written only with the help of such studies. An index of words and their various forms must be prepared as found in the classics and inscriptions. A comparative study of the dated documents may throw light on the forms found in undated documents. The Government of India has sanctioned research scholarships for a study of the Tamil Inscriptions upto the beginning of the reign of Kulothunga and for a study of the index of Tolkappiyam. The study of the history of the language from the very beginning, through a series of specialised studies of the different periods has been attempted, in the study of the Tamil Inscriptions of seventh and eighth century and of the early Kanarese and Malayalam Inscriptions by the students of London School of Asian and African studies and the Deccan College of

Poona ; and these may be continued by the Tamil students for the subsequent centuries. The study of the Tolkappiyam fortunately reveals the existence of the grammatical study in Tamil, prior to Tolkappiyar, thanks to his systematic mention of all those rules of grammar and technical terms of the ancient times, specifically as belonging to an age anterior to him. One of the papers submitted to this section gives us a bird's eye view of the pre-Tolkappiyan study of words. It is the detailed study of the words in ancient texts and inscriptions that will throw a flood of light on the development of Tamil. In the absence of these, all attempts at fixing the age of the texts merely on the assumption of certain forms of words may not amount to anything more than a biassed-guess. The tendency in Tamil for the final nasal n to be denasalised into l as pointed above, is older than Tolkappiyam. If that were so, how is one to explain the denasalisation of a final n used by Tolkappiyar himself ? Was there once again a period, subsequent to the Sangam age, when this tendency cropped up afresh ? Or it may be that the denasalisation was restricted to certain dialects which later on spread into all the other dialects. Nirpa and Nirka have been shown to be old dialectic variations. If this was so, it is necessary to study the dialects, if possible of the age of the Sangam and other works. Perhaps this line of study alone will explain the coming into use, all of a sudden, of forms having the present tense sign kir and kinru. In the absence of the reliable explanation of trends and changes, any attempt at fixing the age of the undated documents cannot be considered scientific. In a consideration of these varied forms, the question of the influence of the copyists cannot be altogether neglected. A recent edition of nar*r*inai—a Sangam classic, for the purpose of convenient reading has separated the words but in so doing has given us the ending of many words in *l*, where one should have an ending in *n*. If Modern Scholarship can be capable of this wonder, what may not we expect from the copyists of middle ages, who might not have been scholars themselves.

The pronunciation problem of ancient and medieval Tamil remains still unsolved. Modern Tamil differentiates, in its pronunciation, between the voiceless and voiced stops, though this cannot be suspected from its writings. Is this a new innovation in the language ? If so, when did it start ? These are the problems which face us. The writings can never give us any clue. The transliteration of Tamil words in foreign languages, which differentiate in their writings the voiced and voiceless stops, may help us in this line of studies. One of the papers submitted to this section studies these problems with the help of the inscriptions of the Pallava and Chola period, where Tamil words are found transliterated in Sanskrit verses. The contributor points out that in that period of her study, the law of convertibility of surds and sonants, was not in force and the letters were pronounced as they were written.* One has to study in this way, period after period, for arriving at a general conclusion.

The present time seems to be auspicious. The Government of India are planning a linguistic survey and the Tamilians must now prepare themselves for a study, not only of the cultured languages but also of the unrecorded dialects, of which there are many in our own midst and amongst the aboriginal tribes of the Nilgiri and other mountains. The Linguistic School run by the Deccan College, Poona, thanks to Dr. Katre getting the support of the Rockefeller foundation for running the project in its initial stages, runs a summer and a winter school every year and trains during the rest of the period stipendiary fellows in linguistic research. It is unfortunate that the speakers of the Dravidian Languages including Tamil, have not taken as much advantage as a few others. It is likely that the Summer and Winter schools may be held in the Tamil country when a sufficient number of students of Tamil may get themselves trained for the task ahead of

* The general validity of such an approach is discussed in the article 'Voiced and Voiceless stops in Tamil' appearing elsewhere in this issue. (Editor.)

them. The Annamalai University, thanks to whose hospitality, we are assembled here, has a Chair for Dravidian linguistics and it has invited the School of Linguistics for holding its session within its own precincts. There are brighter days thus dawning, for a study of the history of the Tamil language and its dialects.

In this study, the recent developments of what is called Glottochronology in America, may be of great help. This takes up 215 basic ideas denoted by words which do not usually change, except very slowly in any language and studies how much of these common words are found still in current use, after a period of time in the same language or in the various but connected dialects branching off from that language. The percentage of survival seems to offer a clue for our fixing the starting point. This theory may be verified with reference to Sangaṁ works and the works of subsequent periods ; and, if correct, may help us to fix the respective ages of the various works, on the basis of the statistical formula worked out in detail. This may also help us to fix roughly the time, when the various Dravidian languages separated from each other or from the proto-Dravidian.

In this preparation of the history of the Tamil language, the Inscriptions whose dates have been fixed will be of great help. It is therefore very unfortunate that even the inscriptions so far copied by the Government department had not been made available in print. The centralisation of the Epigraphical Department gives no scope for the erstwhile healthy rivalry among the States in collecting and printing the epigraphical records. It is for serious consideration whether the linguistic States may not take over the copying and publication of the Inscriptions in their respective languages and within their jurisdiction.

The history of Tamil country is connected with the study of the inscriptions and the literary evidence. This important and interesting study is still in its initial stage.

A recent study of Kulothungan Pillaittamil brings to light, the fact that the reign of Vikramachola was not such a peaceful one as is often represented. The victories of the Chola over the southern and northern kings is often referred to in this work. His blood relation with his successor is another problem. A study of our literature raises problems like this, which require for their solution the help of the inscriptions. Therefore the non-publication of the available inscriptions assumes a form of dis-service to the necessary pursuit of knowledge.

There is also the history of Tamil literature yet to be written. There is no difficulty in our appreciation of our Classics without reference to their age. There is a paper to be read before us on Attichudi—or Avvaiyar's book of alphabets. There is another bringing out the greatness of Kamban. There is a third which studies the religion of the author of Silappadikaram as revealed in the earliest epic of Tamilians. This shows that the Tamil literature is being studied from all points of view and at different levels without any reference to the difficulties of fixing their age. Every work of art has an individuality of its own, but the whole literature as pointed out by T. S. Elliot forms an organic whole, with reference to which every literary work finds in the National Mind its proper place and equilibrium. It is this perspective that gets blurred in the absence of history of Tamil literature. The main difficulty lies in the problem of fixing the age of the various works. Many of the so-called histories of Tamil literature are getting themselves lost in these intricacies. No attempt has been made for tracing the history of literary tendencies, conventions, forms and modes and of the rhythm. If one starts from the beginning, in the mysterious past, this difficulty is unavoidable. May I therefore humbly suggest that we do reverse the process and start writing or studying the history backwards from Modern times, whose contributions are unfortunately very much neglected, in our Modern Studies and College courses. We can then trace every modern

trend to the old poets and scholars, century after century, conveniently making the clock of time run backwards. One's familiarity with modern literature will help one to see the historical development more clearly than otherwise. There may be the danger of seeing things modern in things ancient everywhere ; but such pitfalls beset the way of every research. But if one can guard against that, this is always the better method of studying history—proceeding from the known to the unknown. This may help us to fix the relative age of historical trends and works from this point of view. This is nothing new. This is what a great educationist, a great headmaster of a famous English School, Mr. Sanderson had suggested for a study of history itself. In spite of our pre-occupation with the ancient classics, the course suggested will help us to keep a living contact with the literature of the people and its influence on our classics all through its history reminding us forcibly that our country had not been non-existent after the age of the classics, and that our people always continued to sing and recite, to compose and enjoy poetry all through their existence. This seems to be the more democratic course also. The ancient classics, through this slow and steady process, get themselves fixed in the general scheme of Tamil literature in its historical march. When their influence is traced this way, their greatness and significance leap up before our mind's eye as a divine presence always with us. Perhaps, in the future courses of our post-graduate study, we must lay the emphasis, for these reasons, on the specialisation of these later periods of Tamil literature.

The inter-relation of Tamil and other languages and other cultures raises very significant and surprising problems. Malayalam in its northern parts, conducts shadow-plays where the wire-pullers behind the screen recite Kambaramayanam verses. Provision had been made in ancient times, for recitation of Kambaramayanam in Malabar. Tulsidas who is considered to have come on a religious pilgrimage to Rameswaram, in the Tamil country,

writes in his Ramacaritmanas, of Rama and Seetha meeting and falling in love with each other before the Swayamvaram began—a version which is found only in Kamban, true to the Tamilian tradition of love—a version which must have appealed to Tulsidas during his southern pilgrimage. The influence of Ramanuja and the Tamil Bhakti cult on the religious Reformers of the North, though vaguely guessed, has yet to be studied in all its details. The stories of the Saiva Saints of Tamil Nad have travelled to the Telugu and Kannada countries not to speak of their Sanskrit versions. Tamil works have been copied in Malayalam, Telugu and other scripts and a detailed study of such works will explain the spread of Tamilian influence and the reason therefor. Another method of studying this influence is through the Tamil inscriptions outside the Tamil country.

This again raises the philosophical contributions of the Tamil land. Saiva Siddhanta texts and commentaries, the Srivaisnavate commentaries and sutras are in Tamil and without an acquaintance with these, one cannot pretend to have a first-hand knowledge of these schools of thought. The importance of Tevaram in the development of Temple cult is brought out in one of the papers to be read here, whereas another contribution emphasises the significance of the hymns and philosophical works in Tamil of the Chola period. This influence cannot be easily exaggerated. Dingnaga, the Buddhist Philosopher was a resident of Kanci. The founder of Zen Buddhism was a prince of Kanci. Ramanuja also resided there, though born at Sriperumputur near Madras. Sankara was a native of the Cera country then a part of the Tamil land. Ramanuja admittedly traces his thoughts to the Tamil songs of Alwars. Sankara, if Saundaryalahari is his work, knows the Tamil compositions of Gnanasambanda. This line of thought will lead us to seek in the great works of these philosophers a Tamilian influence or at least a Tamilian atmosphere. This opens up a new field for research.

In this connection, it may be advisable, for opening specialised courses in philosophy and religion for the Tamil Vidwan and Tamil Post-graduate students. A systematic training may inspire them to pursue further research therein. As in Sanskrit the Tamil course also may lead to specialisation in Grammar, literature, literary criticism, comparative and historical philology, philosophy, religion and history.

The Tamilian contact with the West—with Greece and Rome was a definite fact, though all the details are not yet worked out. The Arikkamedu excavations have been very fruitful and we have to make more excavations of this type. More than these excavations, the surveys of marine archaeology to be made like those carried out by Philippa Diole, may bring to light many ship wrecks and articles of trade which may describe this contact in more eloquent terms. In his book "4,000 *years under the Sea*", Diole says, "The Arretani Pottery found near Pondicherry, the Roman coins dug up on Indian soil, the Temple of Augustas at Mysore, all these things bear witness to the long continuance of that maritime route on which the Arabs had laid their hands......We find proof of this liaison in a people living at the further end of the great route, in the parts of Southern India, where they served as a link between the East and Far East. They were a half-way house people. Perhaps in pre-historic times they had watched ships coming from the West and had loaded them for the return journey with what their own ships had brought from China and Ceylon. These Tamils, who perhaps preserve in their traditions, as a memory, of what life once was like, in the Mediterranian, were Dravidian pre-Aryans. They have a very old literature of no little importance. This Tamil civilisation was quite as old as possible to estimate the extent of the debt owed by each to other ; there is little doubt, but that the Tamils would prove to be by far the bigger creditors. One of their kings, King Pandya had sent an embassy to Augustus. They had known at one

and the same time the civilisation of the West and the civilisation of China—thanks to their familiarity with sea. Like the Cretons the Tamils were great divers—the foremost pearl divers in the world." After referring to their breathing technique which also plays an important part in their religious mystical practices, he concludes "The junks which in the 10th, 11th and 12th centuries carrying the trade between China, India and the Persian gulf contained a group of Tamil divers, whose duty it was, to inspect the hulls and carry out repairs by daubing holes and cracks with a composition made of sesame and wax". This outline has to be filled up by a detailed research. The foreign words found in Tamil and the Tamil words found in foreign languages are worthy of study from this point of view.

The contact with the East, which developed into a cultural empire of a Greater India, had been studied with the help of Inscriptions of the Pallava and Cola period. There are Tamil inscriptions in those distant places. The Bengali writers who studied the civilisation of the Eastern Archipelago emphasised the contribution of their own country and they claimed that the National swing festival of Siam was only their own Swing festival connected with the worship of Krishna. I pointed out in the Tamil Festival celebrated at Madras, what had been, till then, overlooked in all these discussions—the name 'Tiruppavai and Tiruvembavai' the name of the festival which beyond all doubts is based on the title of two famous works of Tamil land—Tiruppavai of Andal and Tiruvembavai of Manikkavachakar. This clearly proves the importance of these two works which are coming back to attain their own importance in the modern world, thanks to the attempts of Sri Sankaracharya of Kumbakonam. Rev. Thaniyanayakam has brought to our notice that the songs "Aatiyum" and "Paacam" from Tiruvembavai were recited as LEREMBA mantras during Coronation and other festivals in Siam. It is not clear what verses were recited from Tiruppavai. All this opens up another line of research.

There is one other important problem that of the inter-relation of Sanskrit and Tamil which may be compared to the confluence of our sacred rivers, the Ganges and the Jamna ; meeting together they flow to the sea as one great river. In the development of culture, it is a sign of death, if one does not respond to the environment. Response to this stimulus is a sign of life. Life is a process of give and take. But borrowing or adaptation is often looked upon by the Chauvinist as a sign of inferiority. This outlook is an expression of the inferiority complex. Culture is a happy commingle of contributions coming from all sides. In the inter-relations of the Tamil and Sanskrit, it is often assumed that it was always an one-way traffic. When it is realised that Sanskrit was the *lingua franca* of India, and that Tamilians like Sankara and Ramanuja contributed their best to this common heritage, it becomes clear how futile it is to speak of a borrowing from Sanskrit as distinguished from a borrowing from specified author. Borrowing from Sanskrit is as meaningful or meaningless as Tamil borrowing from Tamil. I had already referred to the problem of defining the Tamilian atmosphere in the works of those Sanskrit writers hailing from the South. There is again the riddle of Tolkappiyam. It has pregnant suggestions about Dhavani—iraicci—long before the Dhavani School had its rise. In a paper to be read before the Classic Sanskrit Section discussing the Age of Kulasekara, it is said as printed in the Summaries of papers : " It is impossible to be laid that by 800 A.D. a South Indian Commentator could directly refer to that Dhavani doctrine ". But does not Tholkappiyam show that this position is not so clear as to be stated in such a dogmatic way ? The relationship between Kashmir Saivaism on the one hand and Saiva Siddhanta and Tirumantram of Tirumular on the other and the relationship between the Tamils' iraicci and the Kashmirean Dhavani—how and why these developed in the distant North and South are as interesting and significant as the Kashmir problem in the modern international world.

The Rasas mentioned in Tolkappiyam do not all agree with those mentioned in Bharatha. In the place of Sringara we have uvakai or joy. Again the lexicon Tivakaram of the Pallava age gives a list of the figures of speech which is more recent than Bharatha's but more ancient than that of Bhamaha or Dandi....marking and revealing a necessary stage in the development of the Alankara Sastra. Dandi was a great force in the Tamil country. He refers in his Avanti Sundara Katha to a Tamil architect who had written Sudraka carita in Tamil. This gives a valuable clue to the nature of Tamil literature of 7th century. He refers to the Sangatha which is often interpreted as a reference to Dravida Sangatha ; probably Sangam anthology and Andhadis were in the mind of Dandi. He speaks of Kriyavidhi and Kriya seems to refer to Kavya. My friend Dr. Raghavan had pointed out in one of his interesting papers that Kriya Kalpa was the old name of Poetics as found in Vatsyayana Kama Sutra and Lalita Vistara. Tolkappiyar and ancient Tamils called their literary composition ceyyul (செய்யுள்) —a word which reminds us of the word Kriya—indeed a rare usage in Sanskrit. There is again the question of the relationship of the Tamil music with the South Indian music and the Tamil dance with Bharata Natya. There are again references to Sanskrit works in the Tamil commentaries to Katantra, Kama Sutra, Kamantaka, Patanjali etc. There are also references to Prakrit works, the Kanarese works like Gunagangeyam unfortunately not available at present. Schools of Philosophy are summarised in a few works in Tamil.

The Sivagnanabhodam in Tamil—the 12 sutras—is often considered to be a translation into Tamil ; but a comparative study convinces many that the Tamil work was the original one. The Tamil sutras are complete in themselves whereas in Sanskrit, the whole idea is expressed in 11½ slokas whilst the last line states "so learn the well defined idea of Saiva Siddhanta in Sivagnanabhoda." Cekkilar's Periyapuranam has been translated as Upamanya

Bhakta Vilasam. This latter is often claimed as an original work and if this is true Cekkilar's creative genius has to shrink into insignificance. But in one of my studies ' Anpu muti '—the study on Eripatta Nayanar, I pointed out how the Sanskrit work makes blunders which can be explained only on the basis that it is a translation, especially where Cekkilar is crystal clear to a student of Tamil and history. Kaivalya Navanitam, the most popular book on Vedanta in Tamil, popular even in Malayalam and Telugu countries, has been recently attempted to be shown as a translation of the work of that name by Sankuka. A detailed study will show that Sankuka was but a translator. Guhesan is the word used in Tamil for referring to the Absolute as an immanent principle. Guhesan connotes, thanks to its yoga Sakti, the lord of the cave of the heart—the immanent principle which is alone germane to the context. Sankuka translates the word as " vallisa " in the impression that the denotation Subramanya is what is important here. Examples could be multiplied. A detailed study on the lines has yet to be made about these books which look so much alike in Sanskrit and Tamil. Apart from these there are admitted translations—translations of Tirukkural and Tiruppavai etc. in Sanskrit and translation of Suta Samhita and Kurmapurana etc. in Tamil ; whilst there are other books adopting the ideas without attempting at a translation.

There are various other interesting problems, significant from the point of Indian Culture, as yet to be solved by Tamil Scholars. The great handicap here, is that the student has not any opportunity of knowing, what had already been done in the field. There is often unnecessary duplication. The Universities and research bodies should co-operate in drawing out a common programme of work in which they can pursue the studies in their respective specialised fields.

A Bibliography with a summary of the contributions is absolutely necessary. No individual can undertake this

stupendous task. It requires any amount of travel for collecting materials, a knowledge of Western and Indian languages, the co-operation of Scholars in other lands and in other languages and above all time and money, which can all be expected only from University or at Government level.

So much to do and so little done—that is the piercing cry of our heart. A translation of all the classics may throw them open to the world and they may bring the co-operation of foreign scholars. As the generation of Tamil Scholars strong in English is fast disappearing, this has to be undertaken now or never.

But there is one great consolation for the student. An unexplored part of the intellectual world lies here welcoming him with a tempting offer of success and fame. May this temptation appeal to the rising generation !

ANNAMALAI UNIVERSITY

AN APPEAL

The Tamil Research Department of the Annamalai University has undertaken the preparation of Bibliographies relating to "THIRUKKURAL" and "THIRUMANTHIRAM". This is the first time that a scientific and systematic approach to these works is being made by a band of scholars and through the forum of a University.

Authors, publishers, scholars, societies, libraries and other organisations are requested to send copies of all works (books as well as articles) concerning these classics, for favour of perusal and return. All communications in this connection may please be addressed to the Professor of Tamil Research, Annamalai University, Annamalainagar, South India. In the case of cadjan leaves manuscripts and rare firts editions, it will be helpful if details thereof are made available by those who may possess or have knowledge of them. The sources of the information will be duly acknowledged in the publications.

Annamalainagar, (SM. L. LAKSHMANAN CHETTIAR),
2nd April, 1956. *Public Relations Officer.*

Old Tamil, Ancient Tamil and Primitive Dravidian*

SUNITI KUMAR CHATTERJI

1. To reconstruct the sound-system and morphology of Primitive Dravidian would be an extremely difficult task because of the very late date of the material in the various Dravidian languages at our disposal. Primitive Dravidian as a single speech, judging from the lines of development and the rate of progress among the different Dravidian languages of the present day, can perhaps be taken back to about three thousand five hundred years from now: 1500 B.C. may tentatively be put down in round numbers as a date for the hypothetical single speech which is the source of all the current Dravidian languages of India. To arrive at the situation for a language of about 1500 B.C. from specimens of its later phases some 2000 years younger (as in the case of the oldest forms of the present-day Dravidian languages) would indeed be a most difficult, if not an almost impossible task. Considerable progress has, however, been made in this matter by the researches of scholars like Jules Bloch, K. V. Subbayya, L. V. Ramaswami Ayyar, K. Ramakrishnayya, Edwin H. Tuttle, S. Anavarata-vinayakam Pillai, Alfred Master, T. Burrow, M. B. Emeneau, Pierre Meile and others; and

* This article was originally published in the Jules Bloch Memorial Number of *Indian Linguistics*, Calcutta, Vol. 14, January, 1954. Dr. Chatterji has made some corrections and additions to make the article more complete, and we are grateful to this eminent scholar for asking us to republish it in *Tamil Culture*. The argument is based on an assumption that the cave inscriptions of the 3rd century B.C. in Brahmi characters in South Tamil Country represent oldest specimens of the Tamil Language, but other available evidence, linguistic and historical, does not confirm this assumption. Attention is invited in this connection to the articles 'The Brahmi Inscriptions of South India and the Sangam Age' and 'Voiced and Voiceless stops in Tamil' appearing elsewhere in this issue. —*Editor.*

through their labours we may hope to form some idea of Primitive Dravidian, and set it up, e.g. beside Primitive Indo-European.

2. The oldest specimens of Dravidian are possibly to be found in a series of cave inscriptions in the South Tamil country engraved in Brahmi characters of the 3rd century B.C. (In the opinion of some scholars, these inscriptions might be one or two centuries later, in spite of the archaic character of the script.) These were first discussed in their ensemble by the late H. Krishna Sastri in 1919 (Proceedings and Transactions of the First All-India Oriental Conference, Poona, 1919 : Bhandarkar Research Institute, Poona, 1922 ; " Caverns and Brahmi Inscriptions of Southern India," pp. 327-348), although they were noticed earlier in the Madras Epigraphical Reports for 1912, 1915 and 1918. H. Krishna Sastri was not sure about the nature of the language, but he noted the possible occurrence of Prakrit words, and thought it might be a kind of Prakrit mixed with Dravidian. In 1924, K. V. Subrahmanya Ayyar attempted the first serious readings of these inscriptions, and he read them definitely as a kind of Old Tamil, apparently earlier in structure than the oldest Tamil which we have in literature (Proceedings and Transactions of the Third All-India Oriental Conference, Madras, 1924 : " The Earliest Monuments of the Pāṇḍya country and their Inscriptions " pp. 275-300). Younger in date are the Arikamedu Pottery Fragment Inscriptions alleged to be of the first century A.D., but some scholars (e.g. C. Sivaramamurti) think they are of the 3rd or at least of the 2nd century B.C. These also are in Brahmi characters, and K. V. Subrahmanya Ayyar has similarly interpreted them as very old Tamil (*Ancient India*, No. 2, New Delhi, July 1946, pp. 111 ff). Accepting, in the absence of a more satisfactory explanation, that these Brahmi documents represent oldest specimens of the Tamil language that we have, we find that the orthography was halting and defective, suggesting that the Tamil language during the 3rd

century B.C. was being reduced to writing for the first time. The finished and consistent orthography of Cen-tamiẓ or Old Tamil (using this expression to mean the language as found in the oldest literature of Tamil) we find for the first time in Pallava inscriptions of the first half of the 7th century A.D., an orthography with a phonetic system which agrees with that of the language described in the oldest grammar of Tamil, the *Tol-kāppiyam,* and employed in the oldest works of Tamil which are still extant—the earliest Saṅgam (Caṅkam) and allied texts.

In 1904 E. Hultzsch in his *Remarks on a Papyrus from Oxyrrhincus* (JRASGrBrI, 1904, pp. 399 ff) sought to explain some unmeaning sentences found in the fragments of a Greek drama in a north Egyptian MS. of the 2nd century A.D. as Old Kannaḍa. The fragments deal with the adventures of a Greek woman Charition who was shipwrecked in Indian waters with her daughter and then taken to the court of an Indian king, who is made to talk with his noblemen in their own tongue, with occasional Greek translations, and Hultzsch attempted to explain these passages in the language of the Indians to be Old Kannada. If this is true, then these few Old Kannada words and sentences would be our oldest authentic specimens of a Dravidian tongue.[1]

We are on surer ground for Kannada from the middle of the 5th century A.D., from which period we have a series of inscriptions in Old Kannada (Paḷa-Kannaḍa, or Pūrvada-Paḷa-Kannaḍa) gradually passing into Middle Kannada (Posa- or Hosa-Kannaḍa) by 1000 A.D. and developing a

[1] Prof. T. N. Srikantaiya tells me that in addition to Hultzsch who first sought to interpret this passage as Kannada, R. Shama Sastry (Mysore Archaeological Report for 1926), and M. Govinda Pai ("Prabuddha Karṇātaka", Vol II, Nos. 1 and 2) also attempted fresh interpretations; also B. A Saletore ("Ancient Karnataka", Vol. I, Appendix A). L. D. Barnett's observations, referred to by Saletore, are quite pertinent to the matter. The ancient Kannada character of the passage thus remains undecided.

literature the oldest existing texts in which go back to the 9th century A.D.[2]

In a similar manner, Telugu has recorded its oldest remains so far available in inscriptions from the 6th century A.D., and the oldest books of Telugu date from after 1000 A.D.

Malayalam was an offshoot from Old Tamil. Already some Malayalam characteristics appear in Malabar inscriptions from the 9th century, but as a literary language Malayalam became established as late as the 14th century, although specimens of what may be definitely called Malayalam seem to go back to the 12th century.

3. Tentatively, we may lay down the 3rd century B.C. as the period when the Dravidian speech of the extreme south was first reduced to writing, and the period of intensive literary cultivation of the advanced Dravidian languages unquestionably started from the first centuries after the Christian era. The specimens that we have of Old Tamil, Old Kannada and Old Telugu already show languages very well differentiated from each other, and yet all of them still sufficiently close to each other to be recognised as sister or cousin speeches even at the first glance. The late Prof. B. M. Srikantiah ("Pūrvada Halagannaḍa and Tamil," pp. 652-653, Proceedings and Transactions of the Tenth All-India Oriental Conference, Tirupati, March 1940 : Madras 1941) thought that Tamil and Kannada were one language in the 5th century B.C., but Telugu had already separated from the Southern group. The oldest forms of these languages have naturally enough a closer agreement with each other than their later forms, and on the basis of this agreement an essay might be made

[2] Prof. T. N. Srikantaiya corrects the above statement about the stages in the development of Kannada as follows: (1) Ancient or Pre-Old Kannada (Pūrvada-Paḷa/Paẓa-Gannaḍa), upto c. 750 A.D ; (2) Old Kannada (Paḷa/Paẓa-Gannaḍa), c. 750-1050 A.D. ; (3) Middle Kannada (Naḍu-Gannaḍa), c. 1050-1600 A.D. ; and (4) New or Modern Kannada (Hosa-Gannada), after 1600.

by linguistic scholars with adequate knowledge of all these speeches to reconstruct what may be called 'Ur-drawidisch' or 'Primitive Dravidian', and this essay is now seriously being made by specialists in the field of Dravidian.

4. From a study of the phonetics and phonology of the Old Dravidian languages as in the oldest inscriptions and literary works, some very general notions have been formulated about the sound-system and the morphological bases of this Primitive Dravidian. But here most scholars, beginning with Bishop Caldwell, pioneer in Dravidian studies whose *Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian or South Indian Family of Languages* (London 1856) inaugurated the comparative study of Dravidian nearly a century ago, have been impressed by the peculiar character of the phonology of Tamil as reflected in its alphabet and orthography, and the views of many of the workers in the field of Dravidian with regard to the sound-system and phonology of Primitive Dravidian have been coloured by those of Tamil—including Tamil as current at the present-day with its special habits of pronunciation. There seems to be a general and tacit acceptance of the position that the present-day Tamil pronunciation of the inter-vocal voiceless stops as voiced stops (or even as voiced spirants) also characterised the oldest Tamil of inscriptions and of literature. This tacitly accepted view-point about the sound-system of Old Tamil was generally extended to Primitive Dravidian also, and it was taken as a matter of course that in Primitive Dravidian too, as in Modern Tamil, there were only voiceless stops initially, and voiced ones only medially, either after a nasal or in between two vowels. Caldwell accepted this position in his *Comparative Grammar* (3rd edition, edited by J. L. Wyatt and T. Ramakrishna Pillai, 1913, pp. 137-139), and K. V. Subbayya who first made a brilliant attempt to work out a comparative grammar of the Dravidian languages on the basis of a reconstructed Primitive Dravidian (in his "Primer of Dravidian Phonology", Indian Antiquary, Bombay, Vol. XXXVIII, 1909,

pp. 159 ff, 188 ff and 201 ff), also thought (p. 195, *op. cit.*) that in Primitive Dravidian only a voiceless stop consonant or a nasal could commence a word, and it could in no case be a retroflex consonant or cerebral, and that no voiceless stop was admissible in the middle of a word or in a *sandhi* group except when it was doubled (this is the situation in Modern Tamil). Subbayya further was of opinion that Primitive Dravidian had *b* only after the nasal *m* (p. 197), that *d* was a rare sound in Primitive Dravidian and even then it was medial (p. 201), *ḍ* was also a medial sound (p. 206), and *g′* (palatal voiced stop) and *g* (guttural voiced stop) were similarly medial sounds in Primitive Dravidian (p. 216, p. 219). E. H. Tuttle (1930) and L. V. Ramaswami Aiyar (1934) also accepted this position.

5. The above view had been first called into question by Sten Konow (in *The Linguistic Survey of India*, Vol. IV, 1906, p. 288), and then by Jules Bloch in his article "The Intervocalic Consonants in Tamil" (Indian Antiquary, Vol. XLVIII, 1919, pp. 191-195, translated from French article as in the Mémores de la Société de Linguistique de Paris, Vol. XIX, 1914, pp. 85 ff, with additions, by J. D. Anderson). In this paper of capital significance in the study of the phonological development of Tamil and other Dravidian, Bloch made these suggestions : (i) The Tamil words quoted by Kumārila Bhaṭṭa in his Sanskrit *Tantra-vārttika,* viz. *cor, atar, pāp,* (or *pāṃp*), *māl* and *vair* or *vayir,* are older than what we find in ordinary Old Tamil, which gives some of these words with a final *-u* vowel : Kumārila (end of the 7th century) heard the words without the final vowel, and with *-t-, -p* as in *atar, pāp* ; (ii) Consequently, we can assume that single intervocal unvoiced stops in Old Tamil were pronounced as unvoiced, and not as voiced ; (iii) Initially, from the evidence of the Greek and Pāli forms in *d-* (*Damir-, Damiḷa=Tamiẓ*), Tamil in the oldest period, in the early centuries after Christ, did have initial voiced stops ; (iv) Assimilation of conjunct consonants was a parallel phonological development in

Old Dravidian as well as Middle Indo-Aryan; (v) Like Sanskrit, Primitive Dravidian, before the assimilation started, could have conjuncts like *tr- dr-* initially; and (vi) The voicing of interior unvoiced stops began in Tamil at a time after A.D. 1200. In the Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies, London, Vol. IX, 1937-39, "Dravidian Studies I", pp. 710 ff., T. Burrow has gone into the question in detail, and he is in disagreement with Jules Bloch. He is of opinion that the theory that Primitive Dravidian, the source of Tamil, Kannada and Telugu, had initial sonant stops and even sonant aspirates, is incorrect, and that the existence of the initial sonants in Telugu and Kannada is secondary and cannot be attributed to the parent language. Often Telugu and Kannada words with voiced stops initially have no corresponding cognates in Tamil; and a good number of such Telugu and Kannada words when they are found in Tamil (of course with unvoiced initial stops) are but loan-words from Telugu and Kannada into Tamil. Telugu and Kannada often disagree in this matter, and, as said before, the voicing is secondary in these languages. This irregular voicing Burrow thinks may be the result of the influence of a substratum speech (other than Kol or Munda) which has not yet been properly spotted (p. 722), for at least a number of these words, and for the existence of initial sonants at all. But this view has been objected to by F. B. J. Kuiper in an article in the Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies for the same year ("Zur Chronologie des Stimmtonverlusts in dravidischen Anlaut": pp. 987 ff), in which he lays stress on the forms of Dravidian loans in Sanskrit, and expresses the view that Primitive Dravidian had initial voiced stops, but the 'Tamil-type' developed in even some North Indian Dravidian dialects (with unvoicing of initial voiced stops) during the Upanishad period, which he puts down as 500 B.C. Alfred Master, in his "Intervocalic Plosives in Early Tamil" (pp. 1003-1008 of the same number of the BSOS. in which Kuiper's German paper has been published), however, thought that voiced and even spirantised pronun-

ciation of what are in orthography unvoiced stops occurred in the oldest Tamil (as the modern pronunciation makes it), but he admits the likelihood of **Dramiẓ-*, with initial *dr-*, being the original Dravidian source of the word *Tamiẓ*.

6. The position at the present day therefore is that, with the exception of the doubt expressed by Jules Bloch and F. B. J. Kuiper in this connexion, the general view (as reiterated by T. Burrow in the BSOS article as indicated above) is that Primitive Dravidian possessed initially only unvoiced stops, and voiced stops occurred only intervocally and after nasals ; and that Telugu and Kannada and other Dravidian instances of initial voiced stops do not reflect the situation in Primitive Dravidian. Further, by implication (as definitely suggested by K. V. Subbayya), the Primitive Dravidian also possessed the characteristic Tamil habit of voicing intervocal unvoiced stops : so the orthography of Tamil, it might be concluded from this, keeps faithful to the speech-habit of Primitive Dravidian in this respect, viz., surds initially, and sonants medially ; and thus only surd letters could suffice in writing, following this fixed phonetic character.

7. The orthography of Cen-tamiẓ we find in more or less a fully developed or established form only as late as the first half of the 7th century A.D., in the Pallava inscriptions at Vallam (near Chingleput : South Indian Inscriptions, Vol. II, Part III, No. 72) and at Dalavanur (South Arcot District : Epigraphia Indica, XII, 1913-1914, No. 27). Here we have only unvoiced stops, and no voiced ones, except in the Dalavanur inscriptions, which gives two names of Sanskrit origin with the voiced *b* and *d* : *Bramma-maṅkalavan* = *Brahma-maṅgala-*, and *Civadāsan* = *S'iva-dāsa*. Here the proximity of Sanskrit in Pallava epigraphy is doubtless the reason ; and certainly, as in other words like *Kuṇapara-* = *Guṇabhara, Mayentira*=*Mahēndra-* (Vallam Inscription), the names were pronounced as *Piramma-*

maṅkalavan' and *Civatācan'*. We should also note the retention of the Sanskrit sibilants as in *S'rī* and *Civadāsan* (Dalavanur) and in *Kantasen'a'n'* = *Skandasēna* (Vallam), although the sibilants in other cases become c or *y* (*vayanta* = *vasanta* in Vallam inscription, *catturu* = *s'atru* in both the inscriptions).

8. In the problematic Brāhmī inscriptions found in the Tamil land, as discussed in Para 2 above, the general absence of letters for the voiced stops is noticeable, and this would support a phonetic background for the language of this period—pre-Cen-tamiẓ " Ancient Tamil " it may be called, if the language is really Tamil—to be almost the same as that of Cen-tamiẓ of the 7th century A.D., viz., in the language (at least in its orthography) possessing only unvoiced stops. But in a few cases, *j* and *ḍ*, occur, although not initially ; also the aspirate *ṭh*, and *dh* in an Aryan borrowing (*dhama-*) ; and *s* in words like *Siri* = *S'rī*, *Kosipā* = ?*Kās'yapa*, *siti* = ?*siddhi*, *s'ātāna* = *s'āstā*, and *sālakān* = *s'yālaka* ; besides *b* in one of the pottery fragment inscriptions (*Buttā* = ?*Buddha*). But here we are not on sure ground. K. V. Subrahmanya Ayyar has proposed to read the syllables *ī-ḷā* as Cen-tamiẓ *Īḷam* (= *Īẓam*) = *Sīhala*, a borrowed name : such a change, with loss of the sibilant and of the *h*, would be too early for " Ancient Tamil " of the 3rd or 2nd century B.C., considering also the fact that the sibilant is preserved in these Brahmi inscriptions, and in two Aryan words immediately before this *Īḷā-*, in Inscription No. IV as in H. Krishna Sastri's article noted in Para 2, if we can accept the reading and interpretation proposed. (The inscription, as read and interpreted by K. V. Subrahmanya Ayyar, runs thus : *kāniyan' Natā Siri-Yakuan' dhamām itā Naṭ(ṭ)iñ-Cār'iyan' sālākān' Īḷāñ-Car'ikan' tāntai Cār'ikān' Cēiyā Pāḷiy* : ' This is the charity of the glorious chief S'rī-Yakṣa, Karaṇi (by caste) ; this stone excavation for a relic chamber was made by Cār'ikan', the father of Īḷañ-Cār'ikan', and the brother-in-law of Neṭuñ-Cār'iyan' '.)

9. Pierre Meile has shown how the initial sibilant in both native Dravidian words and Indo-Aryan loans had dropped off initially as well as medially in all the Southern Dravidian languages, including Telugu ("Sur la Sifflante en Dravidien", Journal Asiatique for 1943-1945, Paris, 1947, pp. 73-89). This phonetic development of South Dravidian has also been studied in detail by T. Burrow (BSOS, Vol. 12, for 1947-1948, pp. 132 ff, "Dravidian Studies VI : The Loss of Initial *c/s* in South Dravidian"), and, as Burrow has noted, as early as 1919 E. H. Tuttle had postulated the occurrence of *s* in Primitive Dravidian which had disappeared in the Southern languages. Burrow has noted that this loss of initial *s*- in Southern Dravidian was just a widespread tendency in South Dravidian which became a regular law in Tamil, and the occurrence of a few *s*- forms in Telugu and Kannada, and a few forms where we find *c*-<*s*- even in Tamil, would suggest that there was a certain amount of dialectal preservation of this initial s- even in South Dravidian languages. Herein, as P. Meile also has noticed, there is a remarkable point of agreement between Tamil (and other South Dravidian languages) and Sinhalese which is the southern neighbour of Tamil.

Burrow has made this discovery, which is valuable as it helps us to find an approximate date for this remarkable phonetic change in Tamil and South Dravidian, that what was *Satiya*- in 3rd century B.C. in *Satiya-puta*- (as in Asoka inscriptions) as an 'Ancient Tamil' name became *Atiya*- (as in *Atiya-mān'*) in Cen-tamiẓ of the Sangam literature (pp. 136-137 in "Dravidic Studies VI"). Asokan *Satiya-puta* = **Satiya-putta* would thus appear to be an Aryan reading of what might have been, in 'Ancient Tamil' of the 3rd century B.C., **Satiya-magavan'*; this later became in Cen-tamiẓ *Atiya-mān'*. This phonetic development, involving the line of change *-k-*>*-g-*>*-γ-*>*zero*, it may be objected, would not be proper to assume so early

in Tamil : but we can admit the possibility of the Aryan *mahān* > *mān* influencing this second element in the compound as something which had an honorific force. We have also to note the occurrence of *s* in possible Tamil forms in the Brahmi inscriptions of the Tamil country, as noted above. This loss would thus appear to have marked the Southern Dravidian languages, specially Tamil, between 3rd century B.C. and the period of the *Tol-kāppiyam* in which work the later Cen-tamiẓ change of Sanskrit *s′*, *ṣ*, *s* respectively to *c* or *y*, *c* or *ṭ* and *c* or *t* is noted.

This loss of a sibilant would appear to have passed through an intermediate stage of *h*, which again dropped off, and there is no graphic record of this stage in any of the oldest remains of Dravidian. The use of *s* for Tamil *c* in Greek and Latin transcriptions of a few of what may be described as 'Ancient Tamil' names of places (e.g. *Sorna′tos* = **Coẓ-nāṭu*, *Sa′lour*=?*Cāliyur*, *Mou′ziris*=*Mucir′i* or *Mucur′i*, pronounced **Mujir′i* ?) is no indication or proof of the occurrence of an *s* pronunciation for *c* in 'Ancient Tamil' of the early centuries of the Christian era, as the Indian unvoiced palatal stop is generally represented by *s* in Greek and rarely by *ti* (e.g. *Sandrakoptos* = **Candrakupta*, a N.-W. Frontier pronunciation of *Candragupta*, *Prasioi* = *Prācya-*, *Mousikanoi* = *Mucukaṇṇa* < *Mucukarṇa*, and *Caṣṭana* = *Tiastenēs*). The change of Aryan *s* to *c*, as noted in the *Tol-kāppiyam*, is found also in the Brahmi inscriptions, if K. V. Subrahmanya Ayyar's equating of *ūpācā* =*upāsaka* is admissible.

10. It would appear that prior to the establishment of Cen-tamiẓ orthography as in the *Tol-kāppiyam* and the Sangam texts as well as in the earliest Tamil inscriptions as of Pallava times, i.e., prior to *c.* 600 A.D., when the scholars and grammarians of Tamiẓakam framed a system of writing Tamil based on the actual pronunciation of the language, the only certain or reliable material to reconstruct the sound-system of 'Ancient Tamil' as a stage

between Primitive Dravidian and Cen-tamiẓ or Old Tamil would be the representation of Tamil (and allied Dravidian) words in their actual spoken sounds as heard and noted down by peoples of other languages; here in this case, by Indo-Aryan speakers, and Greeks. Sanskrit and Prakrit borrowings from Dravidian, i.e. from very early phases of the Dravidian languages and dialects as current in both Northern India (now almost entirely suppressed by Indo-Aryan) and Central and Southern India, and Greek transcriptions of Dravidian ('Ancient Tamil') names and words, should furnish us with indirect evidence; and this evidence should be of very great value for us.

11. Dravidian words in Sanskrit and other early forms of Indo-Aryan have been studied by a number of scholars, and F. Kittel in his *Kannada Dictionary* (Mangalore, 1894) has given some 420 words occurring in Sanskrit which have Dravidian affinities. H. Gundert, the author of a Malayalam grammar (1868) and compiler of a Malayalam-English Dictionary (1872), has studied this question, and K. Amrita Row wrote on the Dravidian element in the Prakrits (Indian Antiquary, February 1917) and on some Hindi words of Dravidian origin (ibid., January 1916). The most recent investigations on the subject are by T. Burrow in a series of articles in the Journal of the Philological Society, London, and in the Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies.

Some of these words show initial voiced stops; and a number of them were quoted by T. Burrow in his "Dravidian Studies I", referred to above, pp. 717-718, like Sanskrit *kāñji-*, *kuṭī*, *kuṇḍa*, Pali *cāṭi*, Sanskrit *palli* 'lizard', *kubja*(?), are examples to the contrary, with initial unvoiced stops. Kuiper has discussed the case of the word *kuṇḍa*, which he derives from a form with initial *g-*, and connects it with *gola*, *guḍa* etc. Kittel in his Dictionary gives over a score of Sanskrit words with initial voiced stops in a list of 420 words which look like loans from Dravidian. Even in the lists of Sanskrit vocables

derived from Dravidian made out by T. Burrow (e.g. BSOS., Vol. 12, 1947-1948, pp. 365-396: "Dravidian Studies VII: Further Dravidian Words in Sanskrit", giving 315 words), quite a good few show initial voiced stops and even voiced aspirates (some 38 words). With these and other words of Sanskrit, it would indeed be a little too hazardous to look upon Primitive Dravidian as being a language of the Tamil type in its phonetics and phonology. The evidence from Sanskrit and Prakrit, and from the Northern Dravidian languages, as well as from Telugu, Kannada and Tulu (so long as the phonetic rules cannot be formulated), cannot be entirely brushed aside; nor the evidence from the few Greek transcriptions. And certain general lines of phonetic development noticeable all over the world have also to be considered.

12. In the welter of dialectal forms which characterise all Indian speech whether Aryan or Dravidian, the situation for Ancient or pre-Sangam Tamil, even with the Brahmī inscriptions of the 3rd—2nd centuries being fully proved to be Tamil, still remains obscure. One swallow does not make summer, but one or two indications in certain cases may very well be made the basis for generalisation.

13. The word *Tamil* itself (*tamiẓ*) is a case in point. From the earliest documents in the language itself, the word shows an initial unvoiced stop, *t*-. But most assuredly, in the early centuries after Christ, when the Greek traders from Egypt and the Eastern Mediterranean used to visit South India, the word was pronounced, as Jules Bloch has suggested, with an initial voiced stop, *d*-; and Greek transcriptions, including those which are palpably corrupt forms, are based on a pronunciation with *d*-. What is found in Cen-tamiẓ as *Tamiẓakaṃ* 'the Tamil land' was certainly **Damiẓakam*, which gave an original Greek transcription **Damirikē* which has been corrupted variously as *Dymirikē* (3rd century A.D.), and as *Lymirikē*. The Sinhalese neighbours of the ancient Tamils noted

down the name as *Damiḷa,* as in the Pali *Mahāvaṃsa* (5th century A.D.), and this form of the name, with initial *d-*, is still current in Sinhalese to mean the Tamils. The identity of the Sanskrit *Dramiḍa, Dramiḷa, Draviḍa* with this *Damiḷa-, *Damiẓa-, *Damira-* and *Tamiẓ* or *Tamil* cannot be denied. In his article " Intervocalic Plosives in Early Tamil " (BSOS., Vol. IX, pp. 1003-1008), Alfred Master adduces certain reasons against the view that at some time or other in the history of Old Tamil there were no voiced plosives. His contention, that the doubling of an initial unvoiced stop in *sandhi* with the preceding word suggests the accurrence of a voiced pronunciation of a single intervocal unvoiced plosive as a voiced sound as in later Tamil, may be met by observing that this doubling might indicate a semantic nuance such as we find in many other languages ; and Aryan words borrowed by Tamil like *uruvu* and *pāvam* may very well be MIA forms. Alfred Master's suggestion that Sanskrit *Dramiḍa* might be based on a highly problematic Telugu modification of a likely Tamil form **Tamiẓaḍa,* as made by him in BSOS XII, 1947-48, " Indo-Aryan and Dravidian : III ", pp. 340-364, §57, cannot be accepted. The line of development for this name would be like this : **Dramiẓa-* > Sanskrit *Dramiḍa, Dramiḷa,* and later Prakritised form *Draviḍa* before 500 B.C. ; **Dramiẓa-* > ' Ancient Tamil ' **Damiẓ(a),* whence Greek **Damir-,* Pali (Ceylon) *Damiḷa ;* and, by the characteristic Cen-tamiẓ devoicing, *Tamiẓ,* by 600 A.D. We have also to note that the name of the mountain now called *Podigai* in Modern Tamil = *Potikai, Potiyam* in Old Tamil, was written by the Greeks as *Bettigo*—they evidently heard *b-* initially. The Greek transcription *Mo'doura* = *Maturai* in Old Tamil, *Madurai* or *Maẓurei* in present-day Tamil, is in all likelihood based on the form *Madhurā,* a variant of the commoner form *Mathurā.*

14. The form with initial *dr-* may have a very high antiquity if certain suggestions made by me in 1924 have any plausibility, after the preliminary Mohen-jo-Daro

excavations were made by Rakhal Das Banerjee, who first discovered the site, and opened up for the first time what was later described by Sir John Marshall as the Troy and Mycenae for ancient Indian civilisation ("Dravidian Origins and the Beginnings of Indian Civilisation", in the *Modern Review*, Calcutta, for December 1924). On the assumption that the Primitive Dravidian-speakers as the founders of the Mohen-jo-Daro civilisation were an East Mediterranean people, it was intriguing to find that the ancient Cretans (who are now looked upon as being related to the Dravidians of India) were known, as Herodotos has noted, as *Termilai*; and the Lycians, who on the same testimony came to Asia Minor from Crete, called themselves in their inscriptions in Lycia *Trm̃mili*. *Termilai-Trmmili* of the middle of the 1st millennium B.C. as an ethnic name can very well be compared, as Eastern Mediterranean forms of the name, with **Dramiẓ*(*a*)-*Dramiḷa*- **Damiẓ*(*a*)-*Damiḷa-Damir*- and *Tamiẓ* of India. The difficulty here is the presence of the unvoiced dental stop *t* as the initial sound in *Termilai-Trmmili*; the unvoicing in Crete and Lycia might very well be an independent development in those areas. I further suggested a connexion between a Lycian *prñnawate* 'excavated' with Kannada *bare* 'write', originally 'scratch, cut', and between the names *Trqqas*, a deity in Lycian inscriptions, and *Durgā* of India, a common name for the Mother Goddess whose cult came with the Dravidians from the Mediterranean area. (Cf. Asia Minor *Mā* = Indian *Umā*). It would thus appear that Cretan and Lycian preferred to unvoice *dr*- *br*- to *tr*- *pr*-.[3]

15. On the above basis we may be allowed to assume quite reasonably that the phonetic development of Indo-Aryan and Dravidian was, to some extent at least, on parallel lines. There are other indications for that.

[3] Prof. T. N. Srikantaiya has informed me that the Kannada form with *b*- cannot be earlier than c. 600 A.D.; the earlier form must have been **vara*. and this initial agrees with that in the Telugu cognate *vrayu*.

Initially and medially, Primitive Dravidian appears to have started with conjunct consonants, particularly conjuncts with *r* and *l* as their second elements, and these were assimilated. In some cases, there was anaptyxis (*svarabhakti* or *viprakarṣa*), with an intrusive vowel preserving both the consonants and preventing assimilation, such as we find mainly in *semi-tatsama* (modified Sanskrit) borrowings in Middle Indo-Aryan (Pali and the Prakrits) in its development out of Old Indo-Aryan (Vedic, Sanskrit) : e.g. OIA *ratna, harṣa, padma* > MIA inherited words *ratta, hassa* or *haṃsa, pomma* by assimilation, and MIA borrowed *semi-tatsamas* in the literary language *ratana, harisa, paduma,* by anaptyxis.

16. A few other likely Sanskrit loan-words from Dravidian may be taken as indicative of the presence of initial voiced stops, in the Dravidian speech of pre-Christian times, and probably also of the centuries immediately after Christ, as they obtained in the Dravidian languages of the South as well. Thus, we have the word *Garuḍa,* the eagle vehicle of Viṣṇu. There is the Vedic word *garutman* which has been used as an epithet of *Suparṇa,* the divine eagle, and *garutman* has been explained in later times as 'possessed of wings (*garut*)'. It is not known whether *garutman* and *Garuḍa* are related words or not, or whether they are words from different sources which have converged, but *Garu-ḍa* recalls definitely Tamil *kaẓu-ku,* Malayalam *kaẓu,* Tulu *karu* = 'vulture, eagle, kite' : the source might very well be a South Dravidian (including Ancient Tamil) **gaẓu*. The Sanskrit *garda-bha* 'ass' is a word of unknown etymology ; its second element is the common Old Indo-Aryan affix *-bha* which is found in names of animals (*ṣala-bha, kara-bha, vṛṣa-bha* etc.), and *garda* is the basic word, which suggests Telugu *gāḍide,* Tamil *kaẓutai,* Malayalam *kaẓuta,* Kannada *kaẓte,* Tulu *katte,* all of which appear to go back to an earlier **gaẓuda* or**gaẓda-*. Words like *gaṇḍa,* in four different senses (as in T. Burrow's list mentioned above, from as many different Dravidian

sources), *gadā*, *garta* = 'seat of chariot', *galla*, *galva*, *galvarka* (from **gal-* > Tamil *kal* 'stone'), *gulma*, *jaḍa*, *dala* (in two senses, 'leaf, shoot' and 'detachment of troops'), *dukūla*, *dusya* ('cloth, calico'), and aspirated forms like *ghaṭa ghuṭa*, *ghuṇa*, *ghūka*, *dhaṭī* ('loin-cloth'), *bharata* ('actor'), *bhilla*, *bhṛṅga*, etc. as discussed by Kittel and Burrow, for instance, do make a case for the occurrence of initial voiced stops and aspirates, at least in pre-Cen-tamiẓ Tamil and other Dravidian.

17. Devoicing of consonants is a very widespread phenomenon in the phonological history of languages, and even with a full alphabet it is found to have developed in many languages. Tendency towards turning sonants into surds is found in some kinds of German (e.g. Bavarian) ; it was a primitive trait in the development of the Germanic and Armenic branches of Indo-European. The tendency is noticeable in Modern Persian. It has developed in Modern Javanese, and it is found in Finnish and Esthonian, two sister languages of the Finno-Ugrian family. It characterises many of the modern Sino-Tibetan languages, like Chinese and Tibetan. No wonder that it could affect one of the Dravidian speeches of India.

18. The position for Tamil would appear to have been like this. The unvoiced and voiced stops were quite different phonemes in Primitive Dravidian and in 'Ancient Tamil' of the pre-Sangam or pre-*Tol-kāppiyam* period, and either sort could begin words. This situation, along with other phonetic characteristics (e.g. the retention of *s-*), marked 'Ancient Tamil' of the centuries immediately before and after Christ. Then, probably round about the middle of the first millennium A.D., a series of noteworthy phonetic changes manifested themselves in the Southern Dravidian languages, particularly Tamil. Both initial and interior *s-* *-s-* were dropped in both native Dravidian and borrowed Aryan words ; and after this change was fully achieved, in further borrowings from Sanskrit and Prakrit,

the sibilant sounds whether initially or medially were altered to *c*, *y*, *ṭ* and *t*. Then the great change came over to Tamil —the wholesale unvoicing of voiced consonants. This change probably started first as a *tendency* in the early centuries of the Christian era, or even earlier still, but it must have become fully established in Tamil by 600 A.D., for in the early 7th century we find from epigraphic records a state of things which is clearly indicated in the actual Tamil orthography.

19. This great fact is frequently lost sight of : in the oldest Tamil as in the Pallava inscriptions and as in the earliest Tamil of literature, the modern Tamil habit of pronunciation did not obtain. There were no voiced stops at all in the language : otherwise there would have been no need to frame a special alphabet and orthography for Tamil. Intervocal unvoiced stops were pronounced as unvoiced ; they pronounced as they wrote—

akara mutala eẓutt' ellām ; āti
pakavan' mutar'r'e ulaku ;

and to read a verse like the above as—

agara mudala-v-eẓutt' ellām; ādi
pagavan' mudattr'e-y-ulagu ; or as—
aɣara (ahara) muδala-v-eẓutt' ellām ; āδi
b(h)aɣavan' (bahavan') muδ at't'e-y-ulaɣu
(-y-ulahu),

(it is to be noted that the final *-u* in Modern Tamil is pronounced as an unrounded vowel, with spread lips) will be to impose modern habits of pronunciation on the form of the language as it was 1500 years ago. It would be like reading Chaucer's or Cædmon's Middle or Old English verses in a Modern English pronunciation.

The compilers of the Madras University Tamil Lexicon acted wisely in employing a Romanisation which was strictly a transliteration with full reference to the phonetic system or bases of Tamil as it was pronounced when its

current orthography was fixed: fortunately it has not been a compromise transcription between the modern pronunciation and the old as indicated by the orthography.

20. This Cen-tamiẓ pronunciation, with no voiced stops at all, as envisaged by the spelling of Tamil, certainly obtained in the 7th century A.D., as we find in the treatment of Sanskrit words and names in the Tamil inscriptions. As Jules Bloch has sought to indicate, when in the 7th century, Kumārila Bhaṭṭa (in the *Tantra-vārttika,* Chap. III) wrote down in the contemporary Grantha or Pallava script his Sanskrit work, he indicated the pronunciation of the few Tamil words he had quoted just as he heard it: he wrote *cor, atar, pāp* (or *pāmp*) and *vayir* (= respectively 'rice, way, snake and belly'): these are pre-Sangam forms of the Tamil words which are pronounced in Modern Tamil as *s'oru* or *coru, adar* or *aδar, pāmbu* and *vayiru.* An intervocal *-t-* and a final *-p* were just *-t-* and *-p* to Kumārila in the 7th century: and the final *-u* vowel was also wanting in the 7th century pronunciation. The word *pāp* (**pāmp*?) became *pāmpu,* and finally *pāmbu* as in Modern Tamil.

21. This unvoiced stop pronunciation was something which characterised the Tamil language for over seven centuries— from *c.* 500 or 600 A.D. to probably 1300 or 1350 A.D.—the period which is covered by what we may call Cen-tamiẓ or Old Tamil. Jules Bloch, dating Pavananti's grammar of Tamil the *Nan'n'ul* at about 1200 A.D., following L. D. Barnett, thinks that as Pavananti prescribes the use of *k c ṭ t p* in Tamil for all the four stops and aspirates in each *varga,* the unvoiced pronunciation still obtained in his day, and the lower limit for the retention of this kind of articulation he suggests accordingly at 1200 A.D. But there is at least some evidence that this Old Cen-tamiẓ pronunciation obtained up to 1300 A.D. at least and probably for half a century more after that. In the same period, a very noteworthy sound change began to affect the language—the single intervocal (unvoiced)

stops became voiced; also stops after their class nasals. This change ushered in the Middle Tamil Period, with other phonetic and morphological modifications.

We find that the great Venetian traveller and sojourner in China Marco Polo (1253-1323) came to South India, on his way back to the Near East from China by sea about the year 1293. His exact itenerary in South India is not known, but he has left an account of *Maabar* (Book III, Chapter 17), by which the Tamil country was meant, which shows a mixture of true observation and of hearsay and romance. With regard to the people of the country, Tamilians of the end of the 13th century, among other observations he says that "their daily prayer consists of these words, *pacauta, pacauta, pacauta,* which they repeat one hundred and four times." This of course means the repetition of a sacred name, the *japa,* which is done with the help of a rosary of beads (of *tulasī* wood for Vaishnavas, and *rudrākṣa* beads for Saivas) one hundred and eight (rather than one hundred and four) in number. The word *pacauta* has been rightly explained by Col. Sir Henry Yule (*The Book of Ser Marco Polo,* London 1903, Vol. II, pp. 338, 346) as the Sanskrit *bhagavata-* or *bhagavanta-* in its Tamil form *pakavata.* This is how the observant Marco Polo heard the word—the pronunciation was Romanised with the voiceless stops as written in Tamil characters, with *p, c=k, t,* and not with *bh* or *b, g* and *d* in the Roman as the modern pronunciation would require it. This evidence from a foreigner is quite precious: we may be permitted to assume that at least up to the end of the 13th century the voiceless pronunciation of all stop sounds characterised Tamil. After this period, intervocal unvoiced stops and similar stops after nasals became voiced. This continued throughout the whole of what may be called the Middle Tamil period, from 1300 or 1350 to 1800 A.D.; and after this we have finally the *Koḍun-damiẓ* of the New or Modern Tamil period, with the form of the language which has deviated widely from the Classical or Old Tamil with further modifications in pronunciation.

22. Thus, in the 'Ancient Tamil' period, to *c.* 500/600 A.D., we have not only initial and intervocal *s* (which dropped from speech entirely by at least 400 A.D.), but also initial voiced stops *b- d- g- j-* and intervocal unvoiced stops *-p- -t- -ṭ- -k- -c-*. Voiced and unvoiced consonants were distinct phonemes. When the Cen-tamiẓ stage in the history of Tamil started after 500 A.D., all voiced stops, initial or medial, became unvoiced and fell together with original unvoiced ones, so that the language came to have only, in all places, unvoiced stops. It was at this stage that the current orthography as indicative of the sound-system of Cen-tamiẓ was framed by Tamil scholars of the day. The sibilants in newly introduced Sanskrit and Prakrit words became *c, y, ṭ, t*. This state continued to c. 1350 A.D. with increasing influence of Sanskrit. After this, intervocal unvoiced stops became in all cases voiced, and initial ones remained unvoiced : *-k- -ṭ- -t- -p-* became *-g- -ḍ- -d- -b-*, and *-c-* normally tended to change to *s'* in a new pronunciation, but after *ñ*, it became *j*.

Probably as yet there was no spirantization of this stop *-g- -d- -b-*, no reduction to a flapped sound of *-ḍ-* (that is, to the sound of Hindi ड़ = *ṛ*). The spirant pronunciation (*g*>γ or *h*, *d*>δ, *b*>β or *v*) possibly began to characterise the language after 1800. A number of words, mostly Sanskrit, tabulated below will illustrate the position.

It would appear that in between the Ancient Tamil and the Old Tamil periods, as in contemporary Middle Indo-Aryan (Prakrits of the early centuries after Christ), spirantisation affected intervocal voiced stops in Tamil in unstressed prefix and suffix elements—prefixes of course in Aryan loans. That is how **Satiya-magavan'* could become *Atiya-mān'* in Old Tamil (*-magavan'* > *maγavan* > **maavan'* > *mān'*, with likely influence from Sanskrit *mahān* > *mān*, as suggested before in § 9), and Sanskrit *mahā* could become *mā-*.

It is to be noted that in the New or Modern Tamil pronunciation there is a marked tendency to pronounce initial *p- t- k-* as an aspirated sound, p^h-, t^h-, k^h-, usually not so fully aspirated as in the Aryan *kh, th, ph*, but the aspiration is still there ; and intervocal double or long *-pp- -ṭṭ- -tt- -kk- -cc-* tend to become single or short, just *-p-, -ṭ-, -t-, -k-* and *-c-*.

It is not unlikely that in the 'ancient' stage of the Dravidian languages, initial unvoiced stops might have been slightly aspirated : witness the Aryanised form of the name of the Kalinga king *Khāravela* (2nd cen. B.C.), from Dravidian ('Ancient Andhra') *kār* (= *khār*) 'black' + *vel* 'lance'—'He of the black or terrible lance', = Skt. *Kṛṣṇarṣṭi* (cf. my article in "*Vyāsa-saṅgrahamu* : A Miscellany of Papers presented to Giḍugu Venkaṭa Rāmamūrti Pantulu," Gunṭūr 1933 : 'Khāravela', pp. 71-74).

Ancient Tamil before 500 A.D.	Old Tamil 500–1350 A.D.	Middle Tamil 1350–1800 A.D.	New Tamil 1800—
*Satiya--magavan'	Atiya-mān'	Adiya-mān'	Aδiyamān'
[Ganapati]	Kanapati	Kanabadi	K^{h}anaβaδi
*Damizakam	Tamizakam	Tamizagam	T^{h}amizaham
[Sitā, Śitai]	Citai	Cidai, S'idai	S'iδei
[Damayanti]	Tamayanti	Tamayandi	T^{h}amayandi
———	Cilappatikarām	S'ileppadigāram	S'ilappaδiYāram
[Siddha-]	Cittar	S'ittar	S'ittar
———	Kalittokai	Kalittogai	K^{h}alittohei
———	Kampar	Kambar	K^{h}ambar
[Trikaṭukam]	Tirikaṭukam	Tirigadugam	T^{h}iriYaduham
———	Patir'r'uppattu	Padittr'uppattu	P^{h}aδittr'uppattu
———	Neṭum-celiyan'	Nedunjeliyan'	Nedunjeliyan
———	Ilam-Kō-v-aṭikaḷ	Ilangōvadigaḷ	Ilagōvadihaḷ
[Bhūdatta-]	Pūtattār	Pūdattār	P^{h}ūδattār
[Mahā-bhāratam]	Makāpāratam,	Magābāradam	Mahāβāraδam
[?Nal-girār, Nar'girār]	Mā-Nar'kkirār, Nakkirār	Mā-Nakkirār	Nakkirār

23. A close discussion of the phonetic and morphological character of Cen-tamiḻ by comparing it with 'Ancient Tamil' of the period round about Christ discloses the fact that despite the general ascription of the *Tolkāppiyam* and the Sangam literature as a mass to about 1800 to 2000 years from now, from the linguistic point of view the texts as we have them are not so ancient. The exaggerated antiquity proposed for the First and the Second Sangams, of course, cannot be taken seriously, and the Third Sangam was certainly historical, and to this Sangam we must ascribe the first serious beginnings of Cen-tamiḻ literature. The period might be the few centuries both before and after the Christian era, and 'Ancient Tamil' was first essayed to be elevated into a written language with Brahmi letters during this period. With the Brahmi alphabet came a great wave of cultural influence from the North, and Tamil received its first stratum of Aryan words, which through phonetic development of a far-reaching character which characterised the language in this age, ultimately worked a sad havoc with Sanskrit and other words, transforming e.g. *sabhā* to *avai*, *srāvaṇa-* to *āvaṇi*, *pūrvāṣāḍhā-* to *purāṭam*, *sahasram* to *āyiram*, *sneha* to *ney*, etc. The poets and kings and other personalities connected with Sangam works like the *Pattuppāṭṭu*, the *Eṭṭuttokai*, the *Pati-neṉ-kīḻ-kaṇakku*, the *Maṇimēkalai*, the *Cilappatikāram*, may really belong to the first few centuries A.D., but the works as they are current cannot go back in their *language* to this high antiquity. The literary *content* and *form* of these works are certainly ancient—but the language is four to five hundred years younger than the time when they are supposed to have been composed. In other words, *it can be very reasonably assumed that the originals of these Sangam works were composed in 'Ancient Tamil' of the first three centuries after Christ, but they have had their language altered, and they are found in Cen-tamiḻ redactions which must date from about 600 A.D. and later.*

24. A significant legend or tradition in this connexion may be mentioned. It is said that the very famous Sangam poet Nar'kkīrār, whose date has been suggested as the 2nd century A.D., made a commentary on the *Akapporuḷ*, known also as the *Kaḷaviyal*, "a grammar of love poetry in 60 *sūtras*" composed by Iraiyan'ār, a contemporary of Nar'kkīrār. The tradition is that Nar'kkīrār's "commentary was handed down orally for ten generations, when it was put into writing." (*Studies in Tamil Literature and History* by V. R. Ramachandra Dikshitar, London, Luzac & Co., Printed in Madras, 1930, p. 5). Thus there is tradition, accepted as genuine by most scholars—Old Tamil writers and modern historians—that a book could be composed in the middle of the 2nd century A.D., transmitted orally for 10 generations involving at least 250 years (computing a generation, as is commonly done, at 25 years), and written down, obviously in the altered language of two and a half centuries later. Thus according to this tradition, the final redaction of at least one of the Sangam works would easily come to c. 400 A.D.; and it could be brought down to a later period still, if 30 years or more are given to a single generation. Thus we may say that Nar'kkīrār, as typical of Sangam poets, wrote in 'Ancient Tamil' of the 2nd century A.D., but his book has been preserved in Cen-tamiẓ of the 5th century at the earliest and probably of the 6th or 7th century.

25. Another point to be noted is that a grammatical description of language or a formulation of the subject matter of its literature (such as we find in the *Tol-kāppiyam*) can only be later than or contemporaneous with that literature as it is flourishing in the language, and this grammatical description and formulation cannot antedate the mass of literature which forms their basis. Hence it cannot be accepted that the *Tol-kāppiyam* belongs to the 4th or even the 3rd century B.C., as V. R. Ramachandra Dikshitar has suggested (*op. cit.*, p. 13).

26. Such a state of things is nothing new or remarkable in the history of literature—viz., of literary *composition* in one form, and an earlier one, and *preservation* and *transmission* in another and a later form of the language. The *Vedas* were probably *compiled* in the 10th century B.C., when writing—a kind of Proto-Brahmi script derived from the latest phase of the pre-Aryan Panjab and Sindh script—was in all likelihood first employed for the Aryan language in India; but some at least of the Vedic hymns were *composed* several centuries earlier and were continued from generation to generation by oral tradition, and these were unquestionably first composed in an older form of the speech than what we find in the compiled text, which is our received text. The compositions of a medieval poet are frequently found in a modern form of the language when there was no contemporary writing down of these. In Celtic Ireland, the Old Irish tales about the Irish heroes like King Conchobar and Queen Medb, Cuchulain and Emer, Noisi and Derdriu, Finn Mac Cumhal and Oisin, which in many cases were composed in the early centuries of the Christian era, are found in a much later form of the language in MSS. like the *Leabhar na h-Uidhre* dating from about 1100 A.D. An Irish hero of the 1st century A.D. knew himself as **Kunokobros*, but this name was changed by the 9th century to *Concobar*; and similarly **Vindi* of the same period became, 800 years after, *Find* or *Finn*. So too with the general body of the language. Yet the literary remains in 12th century MSS. hark back to the 1st century A.D. New Persian of c. 1000 A.D. as in Firdausī's *Shāh-nāmah* preserves a good deal of early material paraphrased, from Pahlavi of c. 500 A.D., and in some cases still earlier, and nobody, until linguistic investigation of Iranian on historical lines came to the field, knew that *Rustam* in 1000 A.D. was **Rotstam* in 400 A.D. and **Raudastama* in 600 B.C., or that *Sohrāb* was similarly *Suxrāsp* in Pahlavi and *Suxrāspa-* in Old Iranian. The period of time intervening has to be considered: the 'Ancient Tamil' equivalents, or rather,

originals or sources, of the later redactions of Sangam Literature, of the works of *Nar'kkīrār* (or **Nal-gīrār*) and *Rudran' Kaṇṇan'ār*, of *Kapilar* and *Cītalaic Cāttan'ār*, and of others, were possibly not very much removed from the Cen-tamiẓ of a later epoch. The morphology was perhaps very similar, only the phonetic atmosphere was different.

27. This will thus be quite in the fitness of things, to consider the progress of Tamil to have been along this line : Primitive Dravidian, c. 1500 B.C. > South Dravidian, c. 600 B.C. > Ancient Tamil, c. 300 B.C.—400 A.D. > Period of Transition, 400-600 A.D. > Old Tamil or Cen-tamiẓ, c. 600 A.D. to 1350 A.D. (writings in 'Ancient Tamil', the original Sangam literature, were gradually changed to the Cen-tamiẓ of literature that we now have) > Middle Tamil, c. 1350-1800 A.D. > New or Modern Tamil, after 1800.

28. The literature in Cen-tamiẓ, moreover, represents two stages or strata—*one*, earlier, the Sangam literature based on that originally composed in 'Ancient Tamil' times ; and *two*, the new religious literature of Sivaism and Viṣṇuism—of *bhakti*, coming into the field after about 600 A.D., which was the great contribution of Tamiẓakam to the spiritual heritage of India, the works of the Siddhas or *Cittār* and the Bhaktas or *Aẓvārs*, which were compiled in the *Tēvāram* and the *Nāl-āyirap-pirapantam* respectively by Nampi-aṇṭār-nampi and Srī Nāthamuni in the 11th century. Of course, both these types of literature have their unique originality ; but the world of Sangam literature is something unique for Tamil, and the cultural atmosphere of this world marks it off as something which, for its special value of originality in depicting both man and nature, has to be ranked with the great *national* literatures of antiquity and medieval age in the different languages of the world, like Old Arabic of the pre-Islamic period, Old Irish, Old Norse, Early Finnish, Old Turki, and the rest.

ADDITIONAL NOTE

Through the courtesy of Prof. T. N. Srikantaiya and Prof. V. I. Subramaniam, I have been enabled to obtain the text of the oldest Tamil inscription hitherto discovered —the Tirunatharkundra Inscription in proto-Tamil characters of c. 400 A.D. from South Arcot district, near Jinji (Travancore Archaeological Series, Vol. I, 1910-1913, p. 231). The inscription runs as follows: *aimpattēẓ-an'a/can'annōr'r'a/Cantiranantī ā/cirikar nicītikai.* 'The *nisidikā* of Candranandin Ācārya who (died) observing 57 days' fasting'. This inscription demonstrates that already by the end of the 4th century A.D. the Cen-tamiẓ character of the language, in having only unvoiced stops and no sibilants, was established. The commencement of the Cen-Tamiẓ stage may thus go back to c. 350 A.D., rather than to 500 A.D., as suggested above.

Prof. Srikantaiya tells me that in the oldest Kannada inscription that we have, the Haḷmiḍi Inscription of c. 450 A.D., and thus only younger by about half a century than the oldest Tamil inscription, the Pūrvada-Paḷa/Paẓa-Gannaḍa (or pre-Old Kannada) speech of it shows a good number of words with—intervocal voiced plosives which are original, and which in Old Tamil occur invariably as unvoiced. Similarly in the oldest Telugu inscriptions also. Prof. Srikantaiya thinks that the common South Dravidian word for 'road' was **adar*, which became, from an extended form **adari*, by regular sound-change, *dāri* in Telugu (which was taken over by Kannada from Telugu), and Old Tamil shows the change of *-d-*, the original sound, as *-t-* in *atar*.

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24th December, 1954.

The Brahmi Inscriptions of South India and the Sangam Age

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The Brāhmī inscriptions which were discovered in the Madurai and Tirunelveli districts early in the century[1] have continued to baffle students of Indian history. Meanwhile, in 1945, the excavations at Arikāmēḍu have revealed, amidst other interesting material, twenty pot-shreds bearing graffiti which present short inscriptions. In respect of script and language the graffiti show a marked resemblance to the fifty epigraphs of the Madurai and Tirunelveli districts mentioned above.[2] Several attempts have been made to determine the script and language as well as the contents and significance of these inscriptions.

It is indisputable that the characters employed in all these epigraphs are Brāhmī, paleographically assigned to about the 3rd century B.C. The script resembles in a large measure those of the Bhaṭṭiprōḷu casket inscriptions, the celebrated Aśōkan epigraphs and the early inscriptions of Ceylon. Nevertheless, there appear certain notable differences, too. For instance, the symbol taken to represent ḍa is peculiar to the South Indian Brāhmī inscriptions. The symbol for ḷa, which occurs several times here, is totally absent in the Northern Brāhmī epigraphs. The formation of 'ma' in the southern records, as a loop with a cross bar, is markedly different from that found in the Aśōkan and Bhaṭṭiprōḷu inscriptions. The differences have led certain archaeologists to suggest that the script of the Arikāmēḍu

1 Annual Report on South Indian Epigraphy for 1912, Plate facing p. 57; Idem for 1915—Pl. facing p. 86 and idem for 1918, Pl. facing p. 7.

2 Ancient India, No. 2, p. 109.

graffiti as well as that of the inscriptions lower down in the south belonged to the Dravidi pattern, as distinct from the North Indian Brāhmī of the Asōkan type.[3]

It has also been suggested that the Dravidi form of Brāhmī is the immediate ancestor of Vaṭṭeluttu, which preceded the modern Tamil script. This view, propounded by Dr. Buhler, was opposed by Dr. Haraprasada Sastri who thought that Vaṭṭeluttu developed from Kharōshṭi.[4] But it must be observed that Kharōshṭi, unlike Brāhmī, has almost similar symbols for several letters, has fewer loops and is written from right to left. Vaṭṭeluttu has decidedly more features in common with Brāhmī than with Kharōshṭi and this seems to confirm the view that it was an adaptation of Brāhmī.[5] Vaṭṭeluttu was common in South India till about 1000 A.D. after which, too, for several centuries, it was continued in the Malayalam country.

On the question of the language of the South Indian Brāhmī inscriptions the views of experts vary. Mr. H. Krishna Sastri struggled hard at the identification of the language of these records, and while indicating the numerous derivations from Tamil on the one hand and the several words which were entirely unidentifiable on the

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[3] Dr. Buhler postulated the view that sometime prior to the 5th century B.C. the Dravidi script branched itself off from the main stock of Brāhmī which was Semitic in origin, and developed certain peculiarities. (Buhler: Indian Paleography, Appendix 8). But Edward Thomas, Cunningham and Dowson held that the Brāhmī script itself was of Dravidian origin and that the northern type is the offshoot of the original. Cunningham in particular believed that Brāhmī was derived from a lost pictographic source. Prof. Langden detected the influence of the Mohenjo-dāro and Harappa script on Brāhmī, and this view has been strengthened by the findings of Dr. G. R. Hunter. (See G. R. Hunter: "The Script of Harappa and Mohenjodaro and its connection with other Scripts", pp. 17, 22 and 49.). If the Dravidians were connected with the Indus Valley culture, as appears to have been the case, the Dravidian origin of Brāhmī is plausible. See also 'Ancient India' No. 9 (1953) p. 215.

[4] Bihar Orissa Research Society Journal, Vol. I. p. 58.

[5] Buhler: *Indian Palaeography*, p. 73 Contra: Burnell, *Elements of South Indian Palaeography*, p. 49. Dr. Burnell imagines on grounds, which are uncertain, that the Tamils adopted Vatteluttu from the Phoenician script. T. A. G. Rao demonstrates the affinity of Vatteluttu to Brāhmī. See TAS. Vol. I, p. 284.

other, suggested the view that the language was Early Tamil with an admixture of Prākṛit words.[6] Less circumspect was Mr. K. V. Subrahmania Aiyar who categorically pronounced the language of the inscriptions as Old Tamil. Frequently he was obliged to resort to wild conjectures for the purpose of reading Tamil words into the available material.[7]

The variations in their respective readings too, are striking. For example, what is accepted as 'je' in the Ānamalai inscription by Mr. Sastri is taken as 'ku' by Mr. Aiyar. What Mr. Sastri reads as 'jam' in the Tirupparamkunṛam epigraph is read by Mr. Aiyar as 'ḷa' and so on. Certain words, too, have been translated differently by these two writers. Some translations are palpably wrong, while certain others do not convey any sense whatever.[8]

Dr. C. Narayanarao, rejecting for the most part the readings of the two above-mentioned epigraphists, provides his own, and concludes that the language of the records is the Paiśācī form of Prākṛit.[9] Arguing that all the contemporary Brāhmī inscriptions are in Prākṛit, he attempts to furnish a Prākṛit derivation to the entire body of epigraphs. For instance, the words 'Koṭupitāvāṇ', 'koṭupitōn' 'kuṭupitā', 'koṭupitān' and 'kuṭupitavaṇ' occurring in the Kongarpulitanguḷam, Āriṭṭāpaṭṭi, Murugāltalai, Uṇḍāṇkal and Aḷagarmalai inscriptions respectively are all construed by him to have emanated from the Pāli root 'Koṭṭēti', while the other writers derive it from the Tamil word 'Koṭu' or 'kuṭu', meaning 'to cut'. A Tamil inscription of Narasimhavarman Pallavamalla has employed the term in this sense,[10] and it seems that the

6 Proceedings of the First All India Oriental Conference, pp. 327-48.

7 Proceedings of the Third All India Oriental Conference, pp. 275-300.

8 For e.g. 'Potatan' in the Kongarpuḷitangulam inscriptions is taken to mean 'one belonging to'. Again 'Kavly' in the Muttuppaṭṭi inscription is conjectured to be either a proper name or a cave.

9 *The New Indian Antiquary*, Vol. I, pp. 362-76.

10 *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. IV, p. 137.

Tamil origin is correct. Nor is Dr. Rao's attempt to trace 'Nāḍu' to a Sanskrit origin from the root 'Naṭ', meaning to 'wander' convincing. Again, such words as 'Uḍaiyu', probably akin to 'uḍaiyān', 'ēri' meaning a tank, 'tantaiy' meaning father, 'Mākan', meaning son, 'ūra', meaning village, are apparently Tamil words. While Mr. Subrahmania Aiyar's venture to connect 'Veṇ' with Vēṇāḍ is far-fetched, we may well accept that the word 'Veṇ' occurring in some of the inscriptions and derived from 'Vēḷ', signified a local chief.[11] On the whole Dr. Rao's position is as untenable as that taken by Mr. Aiyar. Assuredly, Dr. Rao's approval of the view that the prevailing language in the Pāṇḍya country of the 3rd and 2nd centuries B.C. was Paiśācī is as startling as it is unsound.[12]

The legitimate inference seems to be that these votive inscriptions are in a hybrid language containing Tamil as well as Prākṛit words. If certain words mentioned earlier are Tamil, others like 'pāḷi', upāchā', 'chēīya' and 'lēnā' are Prākṛit. The explanation for this strange feature is not far to seek. Buddhist devotees, soaked in Prākṛit, the classical language of Buddhism, attempted to have (Prākṛit) epigraphs inscribed in a manner that could be understood by the people of the region. That accounts for the strange jumble of words belonging to two different languages. The verbal forms, wherever they can be made out, seem to be in archaic Tamil, but it must be remembered that, for the most part, the inscriptions are content with recording the names of those who had the caverns excavated. It is of supreme importance, therefore, to remember that these epigraphs are not of great value to the study of

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[11] The Uṇḍānkal inscriptions clearly suggest this.

[12] An attempt to trace the roots of certain Dravidian words to Pais'āci made by K. Amrita Rao seems to be more ingenious than convincing. See "The Dravidian Affinities of the Paisaca Languages of North-Western Asia" in Sir Asutosh Mookherjee Silver Jubilee Volume III, Orientalia, Part 2, pp. 427-32. Prof. K. A. N. Sastri's suggestion that the language of the Arikāmēḍu inscription is 'Monumental Prakrit' similar to the pattern mentioned in 'Monuments of Sanchi', Vol. I, p. 280, does not explain the presence of Tamil words. See Madras University Journal. Vol. XIV, pp. 3-4.

linguistic development. ' The Arikāmēḍu graffiti have a more pronounced leaning towards Tamil, though they too are not Tamil inscriptions, pure and simple; there are several Prākṛit words there too.

It is an indubitable fact that the South Indian Brāhmī epigraphs are all associated with the Buddhists. The mountain caverns called Panchapāṇḍavarmalai which present the Brāhmī inscriptions are located in almost inaccessible heights of mountain slopes while others are found in out-of-the-way places and still others in the interior of woods. Panchapāṇḍavarmalai probably acquired its name from Pāṇḍavapabbata, associated with the Buddha's name. Again Kaḷugumalai, where some of these caverns are found, is the Tamil equivalent for Gridharkūṭa, or the 'Vulture Peak', intimately connected with the Buddha's career. Circumstantial evidences all show that they were the abodes of Buddhist monks; in particular, the caverns which provide beds with raised elevations for resting the head, resemble the numerous Buddhist monuments of Ceylon, containing similar inscriptions.[13] Little wonder, therefore, that the inscriptions are dominated by the Prākṛit element, though the authors of these records seem to have struggled hard at making themselves understood by the people of the locality.[14] In these circumstances it is extremely problematic to hold that the languages of these inscriptions are truly representative of the standard of the Tamil language.

13 Arikāmēḍu itself appears to have been a Buddhist centre. Not far removed from the Roman warehouse at Arikāmēḍu lies the Kakkayan tope, where a stone image of the Buddha has been discovered.

14 That the Buddhists tried to have their inscriptions engraved in a manner suited to the locality may be seen from the following examples: (a) an epigraph at Maunggun in Burma, comprising quotations from Pāli Buddhist scriptures written in characters which resemble the class of South Indian alphabets (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. V, pp. 101-2); (b) another on a stupa at Khin-bha-gon in Burma in *Pyu* and *Pali* engraved in the early Telugu-Canarese script of South India (Archaeological Survey of India, Annual Report, 1926-7, pp. 171 ff) and (c) another at Kyundawzu in old Prome containing the formula of Vinaya and Sutta Pīṭaka engraved in the same early South Indian script (Idem, 1928-9, p. 109). Apparently this script was in vogue there among the South Indian colonists.

Obviously the inferences attempted to be drawn by certain scholars regarding the history of the Tamil language on the basis of such doubtful hypothesis is venturesome, to say the least of it. For instance, depending exclusively on the questionable deductions derived from the above-mentioned Brāhmī inscriptions, Dr. N. P. Chakravarti has rushed to the conclusion that the language of the S'aṅgam literature cannot be dated earlier than 500 A.D., for, he contends that several centuries should have intervened before the 'crude Tamil of the Brāhmī inscriptions' attained the pattern of S'aṅgam classics.[15]

Such a deduction hardly fits in with the known chronology of the literary development of Tamil. In the first place, it is now incontestably proved that the Tirujñānasambandar lived about the middle of the 7th century A.D. and that Tirunāvukkaraśar was contemporaneous with him. A considerable span of time must have doubtless intervened between the S'aṅgam Tamil and Tēvāram Tamil. The syntax and vocabulary of the language of these two epochs appear markedly different. The Tēvāram hymns are nothing, if not simple, direct and popular invocations while the S'aṅgam classics are conspicuously archaic and terse.

Nor do the religious and social conditions revealed by the literature of these two epochs show similarity. The gods mentioned, as well as the rituals and ceremonies adopted, show a pronouncedly different set up. For example, Māyōṉ of the S'aṅgam age became Kṛishṇa or Vishṇu, and S'ēyōṉ coaelesced with Subrahmaṇia, while Varuṇa and Indra practically disappeared from the Pantheon. The acrimonious rivalry between Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism which is a dominant feature of the Tēvāram period has no parallel in the S'aṅgam epoch. Meat and liquor, so popular in the S'aṅgam age, are despised in the era of the hymns.

15 Presidential address delivered at the All India Historical Congress held at Ahmedabad in December 1954.

Assuredly none can think of assigning the S'aṅgam literature posterior to the Tēvāram hymns.[16] For one thing there is positive reference in Tēvāram to the S'aṅgam.[17] Besides, Tirunāvukkaraśar speaks of Pāri of old as the paragon of generosity who is none other than the celebrated Pāri immortalised in the S'aṅgam literature by Kapilar. The same hymnist refers in a song to Lord S'iva's helping a destitute poet, Tarumi, to gain a purse of gold in the 'S'aṅgam'.[18]

Moreover, those who are inclined to assign the S'aṅgam works to a period later than the 2nd or 3rd century A.D. fail to explain the significant absence of reference to the Pallavas in those classics. Frequently the Mūvēndar are specified as the great monarchs of Tamiḷakam and several minor chiefs are mentioned as well; no plausible reason exists for the omission of the Pallavas if they flourished about that time within the traditional limits of Tamiḷakam. The poets and pāṇar of the S'aṅgam age, who were always in quest of royal patrons could be reasonably expected to have made direct or indirect reference to the Pallavas, if they reigned at Kāñchi in the same epoch. On the other hand, the Perumpāṇāṟṟuppaḍai speaks of Toṇḍaimān Iḷantiraiyan who ruled at Kāñchipuram in the pre-Pallava period. (The suggested contemporaniety of Trilōchana Pallava of the Dekkān, Vijayāditya Chāḷūkya and Karikāla Chōḷa is entirely based upon legends which have been incorporated in the late inscriptions of the 11th and 12th centuries A.D.) Nor could the S'aṅgam poems on the royal patrons have appeared during the period of chaos caused by the Kaḷabhra invasions of the Tamiḷ Nāḍu about the 5th century A.D.

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16 Not even Mr. S. Vaiyapuri Pillai, who has ascribed the Silappadikāram to the 8th or 9th century A.D. on grounds which are unconvincing, has assigned the other S'angam classics to the post-Tēvāram period

17 Tiruttevur Tēvāram, ii, 10.

18 Tiruputtur Tiruttāṇḍagam, ii, line 2. Tirumangai Āḻvār, who lived in the 8th century, if not earlier, has spoken of 'Sangamukattamil' or the high standard of Tamil brought into vogue by the Sangam (Periya Tirumoli iii—4—10).

Above all, the data provided by the early Greek geographers confirm in a remarkable measure the details found in the Tamil classics and thereby help the determination of their date. There are several references to 'Yavanās' in the S'aṅgam works, and doubtless, the term denoted Greeks in the first instance.[19] Later, the Romans, Arabs, and all foreigners were called by the same name.

The Greeks, and following them, the Romans had come to South India as traders, and there arose several commercial settlements of Yavanas in the country.[20] A poem describes the prosperous port of Muchiri, whither the fine large ships of the Yavanas came bearing gold, making the water white with foam, and returned laden with pepper, along with the rare products of the sea and mountains given by the Chēra king.[21] Pepper became the 'Yavana-pṛiya' or the spice dear to the Romans, and it is said that pepper formed more than half the cargo of many a west-bound Roman ship.[22] Pepper, as well as ginger, is mentioned in Graeco-Roman medicine even in the early half of the 1st century A.D.

The Yavanas are known to have been employed by South Indian monarchs for rendering certain kinds of service for which they were eminently qualified. There is a reference to Yavana guards at the palace of the Pāṇḍyan king Āryappaḍaikaḍanda Neḍumceḻiyan[23] while Roman soldiers are known to have been enlisted in the fighting forces of several Pāṇḍyan kings. The Padiṟṟuppattu mentions a conflict between the Yavanas and the Chēra king, Imayavaramban Neḍunjēralātan[24] as a result of which the

19 In North India, too, they were known as Yavanas. Patanjali refers to the Greeks as Yavanas in his Mahabhashyam.

20 S'ilappadikāram, V. 9—10.

21 Ahanānūru, 149; Puranānūru, 343. Compare these data with the accounts of Greek geographers.

22 E. H. Warmington: 'The Commerce between the Roman Empire and India', p. 182.

23 S'ilappadikāram, XIV. 62—7.

24 Padiṟṟuppattu: 2nd Decad.

Yavanas were vanquished and imprisoned, though the cause of the rupture remains a mystery. A song in Mullaippāṭṭu depicts the personal appearance of the Yavanas, their distinctive habits as well as their amazing skill in certain arts and crafts. It adds that their spoken language having been unintelligible to the Tamils, the Yavanas were obliged to employ gestures in order to make themselves understood.[25] The astounding skill displayed by the Yavanas in making artistic lamps of brass is adverted to more than once.[26] Puṛanānūṛu speaks of the importation of delicious wine which was eagerly sought for by kings and courtiers.[27]

The significance of this literary evidence lies in that it tallies remarkably with the data furnished by the Greek writers of the early centuries of the Christian Era, thereby yielding testimony to the chronology of the S'aṅgam. Pliny describes India of the time of Augustus.[28] The author of the Periplus, who wrote in the latter half of the first century A.D. describes the conditions of that period, while Ptolemy, the last of the great geographers, who lived about 150 A.D. speaks of India of the 2nd century A.D. Thus it is not extravagant to suppose that it was the Greek description of the commerce of the 1st two centuries A.D. which was reflected in the S'aṅgam Classics.

Moreover, the hoards of Roman coins unearthed in South India indicate the period when the Roman commerce reached its height.[29] By far the largest number of the coins belongs to Augustus and Tiberius.[30] The references in

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25 Mullaippāttu, 59-66.

26 Perumpāṇarrupaḍai, 316-9; Neḍunalvādai, 101-3.

27 Puṛanānūṛu, 56.

28 Pliny *Natural History*, VI, 142-62.

29 See map showing the distribution of Roman coins, fig. 48, *Ancient India*, No. 2, p. 117.

30 R. Sewell: 'Roman coins found in India', JRAS., 1904, pp. 200 ff. H. G. Rawlinson: 'Intercourse between India and the Western World', pp. 120-1. E. H. Warmington: 'The Commerce between the Roman Empire and India', pp. 286-95. The author, in his critical review, agrees with Chwostow who explains the scarcity of Roman coins in Tamil Nāḍu

Roman sources to the two embassies received by Augustus from the Pāṇḍyan king[31] and to a temple of Augustus at Muziris[32] tend to confirm the evidence of coins.

In this context the chronological datum furnished by the Arikāmēḍu inscriptions is illuminating. The excavations have revealed that Arikāmēḍu was not only an ancient town and port, evidently identifiable with the 'Poduke' of Ptolemy, but also a centre of trade with the Graeco-Roman world. The unique value of the discoveries lies in that they enable us to date the culture of the region almost precisely. On the basis of internal and external evidence, Dr. Mortimer Wheeler concludes that the pottery and the Arretine ware and amphorae, imported from Italy, can be dated to 20—50 A.D. He states: "From a convergence of evidence it is here inferred that the sites were first occupied at the end of the 1st century B.C., or beginning of the 1st century A.D. with an inclination towards the later date."[33] Sometime in the 2nd century A.D. the warehouse in Arikāmēḍu appears to have been deserted, and therefore, the glorious epoch of Arikāmēḍu's industrial and commercial activity ranged about the 1st two centuries of the Christian era. Thus the testimony provided by Arikāmēḍu accords well with the evidence furnished by the Greek writers on the one hand, and by the S'aṅgam classics on the other. Thereby it reinforces the case for ascribing the S'aṅgam works to about the early centuries of the Christian era, postulated on the basis of the Gajabāhu S'eṅguṭṭuvan synchronism.

Consequently the inference is inescapable that the Brāhmī inscriptions of South India of c. 3rd century B.C.

subsequent to the time of Tiberius by the circumstance that, learning of the popularity of the earlier pattern in South India the later emperors reissued coins of Augustus and Tiberius, but adds that after the 2nd century A.D. Romans traded more with the north-west districts of India than with the Tamil States.

31 Strabo: Geography XV, 4 and 73.

32 The Peutingerian Tables.

33 *Ancient India*, op. cit. p. 24.

to 1st century A.D. cannot be taken to represent the contemporary language, and that it is clearly unhistoric to post-date the Classics on the basis of these strange records.

The attempt of the reputed linguist to distinguish three stages in the evolution of Tamil, viz., the Primitive Draviḍian, Ancient Tamil and Chentamiḷ and to equate Ancient Tamil with the language of the early Brāhmī inscriptions of South India seems a misdirected one.[34] His suggestion that the originals of the S'aṅgam classics were composed in the Ancient Tamil of the early Christian era and that the language changed later into Chentamiḷ in which they were written in the 7th century A.D. is at once interesting and ingenious. But until it is proved that the inscriptions truly represent the then prevalent Tamil language, the line of approach adopted by the learned writer seems unwarranted.

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34 See Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterji's article on 'Old Tamil, Ancient Tamil and Primitive Draviḍian' reproduced in the current issue of the *Tamil Culture*.

Voiced and Voiceless Stops in Tamil

A. SUBBIAH.

A century ago, Caldwell, the well known Dravidian philologist, enunciated a law which he designated as the 'Dravidian Law of the Convertibility of surds and sonants', in the following terms :

> k, t: t, p, the first unaspirated consonants of the first, third, fourth and fifth vargas are always pronounced as tenues or surds at the beginning of words and whenever they are doubled. The same consonants are always pronounced as medials or sonants (i.e. as g, d:, d, b) when single in the middle of words. A sonant cannot commence a word, neither is a surd admissible in the middle, except when doubled ; and so imperative is this law, and so strictly is it adhered to, that when words are borrowed from languages in which a different principle prevails, as Sanskrit or English, the consonant of those words change from sonants to surds or *vice versa*, according to their position—e.g., danta, Sanskrit, a tooth, becomes in Tamil, tandam ; bhāga, Sanskrit, happiness, becomes pākkiyam.
>
> The Tamilian rule which requires the same consonant to be pronounced as k in one position and as g in another—as t:, t, p, in one position, and as d:, d, b, in another—*is not a mere dialectic peculiarity*, the gradual result of circumstances, or a modern refinement invented by grammarians, *but is essentially inherent in the language and has been a characteristic principle of it from the beginning.*[1] (Italics mine).

In framing this law, Caldwell was perhaps the first[2] modern Scholar to draw attention to a linguistic pheno-

[1] Dr. Robert Caldwell, "Comparative Grammar of Dravidian Languages', Third Edition, London, 1913, pp. 138-139.

[2] In the Preface to his work *The Phoneme : its Nature and Use* (Cambridge, 1950), Dr. Daniel Jones says that the Phoneme idea is implicit in Henry Sweet's work, *Handbook of Phonetics* (Oxford, 1877), but Caldwell published the first edition of his work as early as 1856.

menon, which later was elaborated into the theory of Phonemes. The credit, however, for identifying this Tamil phenomenon with the theory of Phonemes goes to Daniel Jones, the eminent phonetician, who wrote :

> 'Tamil is a language which illustrates particularly well the grouping of several quite distinct sounds into single phonemes. The grouping has been worked out by J. R. Firth, and details will be found in his *Short Outline of Tamil Pronunciation*'[3]......
>
> 'It is noteworthy that Tamil orthography does not show any difference between all these sounds. Those who originally invented this orthography must have had a clear conception of the phoneme idea, though the theory had never been formulated. This is evidence in favour of a mentalistic view of the phoneme.'[4]

Although the theory had not been formulated, it is implicit[5] in the description of the phonetic structure of Tamil given in the oldest extant Tamil Grammar, Tholkappiyam, written long before the Third Sangam (Academy) period,[6] which is now generally assigned to the centuries immediately preceding and following the commencement of the Christian era. C. R. Sankaran, himself a Sanskrit Scholar and a research worker in experimental phonetics, writes :

> 'Phonemes are significant classes of speech-sounds, in terms of which alone an organisation of the descriptive study of speech sounds of any language is possible. We meet with the accurate description of phonemes of the Old Tamil language, *built apparently on the results of*

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[3] Published as an appendix to the 1934 edition of *Arden's Grammar of Common Tamil.*

[4] Dr. Daniel Jones, *Ibid*, pp. 22-23.

[5] A Senthamilan, *Tamil Culture*, Vol. IV, January 1955, p. 61.

[6] As a grammar presupposes the prior existence of a substantial body of literature and a literary tradition and as the earliest *extant* Tamil works relate to the historical (Third) Sangam period, an inference has sometimes been erroneously drawn by scholars who have no intimate acquaintance with Tamil classical literature that *Tholkappiam* must necessarily be either contemporaneous with or later than the Sangam literature. No one, however, who makes an unbiased study of the grammatical features of the language as described in *Tholkappiyam* and compares them with the Sangam works, can fail to come to the conclusion that *Tholkappiyam* must have preceded the latter by a period of centuries to allow

> *phonetic study*, in Tholkappiyam, which is the oldest descriptive Tamil grammar. Such an emphasis on the pattern inherent in the sounds of the language of study and the attempt to establish, on the basis of their occurrence and distribution, the types of sounds which must have been significant in distinguishing the meaning of words is not met with even in the Ashtadyayi of Panini......
>
> We also learn from this great work a good deal about the allophones or positional variants (viz. members of a phoneme which is itself a class of speech-sounds) whose *variant character is determined by the neighbouring phonemes*......
>
> The author of Tholkappiyam by the rare insight he has displayed in his work, in regard to his treatment of the Old Tamil spoken in his time, has made the work of the modern analyst operating on the Old Tamil considerably easy '.[7]

Those portions of Tholkappiyam which deal with the phonetic structure of Tamil are indeed well worth study by linguistic scholars. The logical purposiveness underlying the rules, which weaves the phonetic structure of Tamil into a variegated but well knit pattern of sound harmony, will come as a great surprise to modern phoneticians, who have yet to explore this field. One recalls to mind, what W. W. Hunter said towards the close of the last century :

> 'Philology has hitherto concerned herself almost exclusively with Indo-Germanic and Semitic speech ; with

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material grammatical changes such as are evident in the Sangam works to evolve. One example will suffice ; in *Tholkappiyam*, verse No. 62, it is laid down that the vocalic consonant ச (ca) cannot occur initially in a word but, already in the Sangam works, the number of words with this initial vocalic consonant is large. Like most Indian traditions, the traditional accounts relating to the First and Second Tamil Sangams are perhaps a jumble of fact and fiction but there are no valid reasons for rejecting out of hand the existence of the earlier Sangams, particularly as later works contain references to, and quotations from this earlier literature. The first and second Sangam works are now completely lost : it is well to remember in this connection that even the third Sangam works—at least most of them—were unearthed, edited and published only during the last few decades.

[7] Professor C. R. Sankaran, *Phonemics of Old Tamil*, Poona 1951, pp. 9-10.

> speech, that is at a single stage, and perhaps not at its most instructive stage. *The study of the non-Aryan tongues of India is destined, I believe, to open the door to the vast linguistic residue, and to furnish the basis of a new science of language,* as the study of Sanskrit in India, eight years ago, afforded the foundation upon which the present system of philology has been reared '.[8]

More recently, Dr. Gilbert Slater wrote :

> We have here a language-system structurally entirely alien from the Indo-Germanic languages, one which belongs to a more ancient type of language ; for the study of inflections in the Indo-Germanic languages shows that these are the degenerate remains of separable additions to roots or stems, and in Tamil such linguistic decay has not taken place. The fact that *present day spoken and literary Tamil perpetuates a much more ancient stage in the evolution of language than that represented by even the most ancient Sanskrit,* seems to suggest that *the Tamil language became fixed in its literary character at an extraordinarily ancient date,* and points to an extraordinarily ancient Dravidic Civilization. Then again *the wonderfully logical and subtle character of the language is such as to arouse the admiration of any student.*' [9]

In this article, we are concerned with verse No. 22 of Tholkappiyam, which anticipates in substance the modern theory of Phonemes. This verse reads :

அம்மூவாறும் வழங்கியல் மருங்கின்
மெய்ம்மயங்குடனிலை தெரியுங்காலை

when those thrice six consonants occur in speech,
the consonant in contact undergoes (sound) modification
if carefully observed.

This cryptic verse does not say however what actual modifications occur ; for this we have to rely, firstly on what might be considered the most natural modification which a consonant needs to undergo to harmonise with its neighbouring consonant and, secondly, on the actual modi-

[8] Sir W. W. Hunter, Preface to *A Comparative Dictionary of the Languages of India and High Asia.*

[9] Dr. Gilbert Slater, *Sir Austosh Mookerjee Silver Jubilee Volumes.* Calcutta, 1925, Vol. III, Part 2, p. 92.

fications which can be observed in present day dialects, particularly as the phonetic structure of the Tamil language as described in Tholkappiyam remains practically unchanged today.

The consonant phonemes of Tamil are divided into three classes :

Hard : க (k), ச (c), ட (t:), த (th), ப (p), ற (t)
Soft : ங (ng), ஞ (nj), ண (n:) ந (nh), ம (m), ன (n)
Medium : ய (y), ர (r), ல (l), வ (v), ழ (l-), ள (l:)[10]

To use modern terminology, the hard consonants may be equated with plosives or stops, the soft with nasals and the medium with non-nasal and non-fricative continuants such as semi-vowels, liquids etc. The principal members of the hard consonants or stops are unvoiced and unaspirated, while those of the other two classes are voiced and unaspirated.

Taking the hard consonants or stops with which alone we are concerned in this article, they may occur in one or other of the following combinations :

(a) a hard consonant preceded by the same or another hard consonant

(b) a hard consonant preceded by a soft consonant

(c) a hard consonant preceded by a medium consonant.

The phonetic pattern of Tamil does not permit a combination where a hard consonant may be *followed* by a soft or medium consonant. What are the sound modifications which one might expect to occur in the above cases which would on the one hand avoid hiatus and on the other ensure acoustic and euphonic harmony ? The articulatory features which distinguish these three classes of consonants are : (a) full obstruction in the mouth resulting in plosion

[10] The system of transliteration described in the concluding pages of *Tamil Culture* has been adopted here.

for Hard consonants; (b) nasal articulation resulting in voicing for Soft; and (c) partial obstruction facilitating a continuant sound for Medium. When a hard consonant follows any of these consonants, it achieves assimilation best through intensified plosion in the case of (a), voicing in the case of (b) and reduced plosion in the case of (c). In other words, the normally unaspirated and unvoiced stop becomes aspirated in (a), voiced in (b) and spirant or fricative in (c). For example,

பம்கக் p a k *k* a m is pronounced as p a k *kh* a m

பங்கம் p a ng *k* a m is pronounced as pa ng *g* a m

பல்கலை p a l *k* a l a i is pronounced as p a l *h* a l a i

Similar examples can be given for the other five stops, except that there are no Tamil words in which the hard consonants ட் ற் (t:, t) are preceded by a medium consonant, as these combinations are banned in Tamil. That the same rule would have applied, if these combinations were permissible, can however be inferred from the fact that, in the case of ட் (t:), when Sanskrit words containing the relative fricative sound are adapted into Tamil, the hard consonant is used in lieu of the fricative, which is not a separate phoneme in Tamil,

e.g., vis*h*am, Sanskrit — poison — (vi*t*:am)
pus*h*pam, Sanskrit — flower — (pu*t*:pam)

The fricative modification of the phoneme ற் (t) is already in vogue in post-vocalic positions in present day dialects.

As these three types of modifications are to be found in practically all Tamil dialects and as the relative aspirated, voiced and fricative forms have never been separate phonemes in Tamil at least since the time of Tholkappiyam, it is a safe inference to hold that *each of the Tamil phonemes*

of the plosive class had at all times an unaspirated, unvoiced sound as its principal member and the corresponding aspirated, voiced and fricative sounds as its subsidiary members.

The existence of the latter members as separate phonemes in Sanskrit suggests that the phonetic pattern of the Tamil language, its phonemic features and its orthography had become fixed before the impact of Sanskritic influence and adds weight to Dr. Slater's statement, quoted earlier, that the present day Tamil represents a much more ancient stage than that represented by Sanskrit, in, the evolution of which South Indian Scholars doubtless played a significant part. Dr. Siddheswar Varma writes :

> 'The Sikshas of the Tait. School are by far the most important contribution to Indian phonetics. As their Mss. are available only in South India, they were presumably composed in that part of the country.' [11]

This is not to say that Sanskritic influence did in no way affect the phonetic behaviour of Tamil, when it spread in South India, during the post-Sangam period. The predilection of Sanskrit speaking groups (perhaps this is also true of the English speaking people of later days) for voiced and, to a lesser extent, fricative sounds in certain contexts was perhaps responsible for an extension of the principle involved in post-consonantal sound modifications, as laid down in Tholkappiyam, to post-vocalic positions also, as seen in present day Tamil speech. In this post-vocalic modification, people speaking a Sanskritised dialect appear to prefer the voiced allophone, while the fricative allophone is in vogue among the rest, although this demarcation cannot be said to be clear cut. In either case no new allophone is introduced ; it is only a change from one to another of the already existing allophones.

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[11] Dr. Siddheswar Varma, *Critical Studies in the Phonetic observations of Indian Grammarians*, London, 1929, p. 37.

Dr. Daniel Jones says:

'People often take speech sounds to be other than what they are. There are two chief circumstances in which sounds are thus misheard. The first is *the common case where a person fails to estimate correctly the quality of a sound of a foreign language or of a dialect,* and identifies it with a sound of his own mother tongue......

The second case is where the various members of a phoneme are not recognised as being different from each other......

It is possible too that *a particular speech-sound may sometimes give the impression of being two different sounds in different phonetic contexts,* in the same way as a given colour may appear to vary on account of the proximity of other colours. Optical illusions in regard to colour doubtless have their counterpart in aural illusions as to qualities of sound.'[12] (Italics mine).

Edward Sapir says:

Phonetic patterning helps also to explain why people find it difficult to pronounce certain foreign sounds which they possess in their own language. Thus, a Nootka Indian in pronouncing English words with ng or l invariably substitutes n for each of these sounds. Yet he is able to pronounce both ng and l.[13] (Italics mine).

This phonetic patterning is perhaps responsible for the modification of many Tamil words by Sanskrit speakers.

e.g., பாகம், *pa*:*k*am, share or division — *bh*a:*g*a, Sanskrit
பூசை, pu:cai, worship with flower — pu:*j*a, Sanskrit

The Sanskritised version was in turn imitated or adopted by Tamil speakers who now pronounce the above words in one or other of the following forms:

பாகம், pa:*g*am or pa:*h*am
பூசை, pu:*j*ai or pu:*s*ai

[12] Dr. Daniel Jones, *Ibid*, p. 36.

[13] Dr. Edward Sapir, *Selected Writings of, Berkeley and Los Angeles*, 1951, p. 44.

The use of the voiced or the fricative allophone of the Tamil stops in the post-vocalic position is now almost universal, although, at the time of Tholkappiyam, the subsidiary members or allophones were used only in post-consonantal positions. This development was due either to Sanskrit influence during the post-Tholkappiyam period or to the general tendency amongst many languages for the plosion of intervocalic consonants to be gradually reduced.

Caldwell's law of the convertibility of surds and sonants is thus an incomplete and inaccurate description[14] of the phonemic nature of the Tamil plosive, which has, in addition to the voiced and voiceless values to which Caldwell refers, an aspirated and a fricative value, which the plosive acquires when preceded by a plosive or non-fricative continuant respectively. The function of the Tamil Auxiliary consonant, ஃ, which is seldom now used in spoken Tamil, has for the sake of simplicity been excluded from discussion in this article.

To a foreigner, this phonemic phenomenon in Tamil would have always been a source of difficulty and confusion, particularly if he happened to be a speaker of an Indo-European language like Sanskrit, where each of the four allophones of the Tamil plosive is a separate and distinct phoneme. The position is further complicated by the fact that speakers of Sanskrit as well as English show a predilection for voiced plosives in certain contexts and are often apt to render Tamil plosives into the corresponding voiced phonemes in their own languages, even where in the actual context of the Tamil word it is not voiced. In transliteration a similar confusion takes place. The native Tamil speaker, on the one hand, when rendering into a foreign language, transliterates perhaps in most cases the principal member of the phoneme as spoken and written, as native speakers are, as a rule, unconscious of the exist-

14 Caldwell had apparently no opportunity of studying *Tholkappiyam*, as he nowhere refers to it in his work. Had he studied it, his linguistic flair would have doubtless led him into discovering the Theory of Phonemes, which is implicit in the phonetic rules of *Tholkappiyam*.

ence of other subsidiary members of the phoneme. On the other hand, the foreign speaker rendering the Tamil phoneme into his own language transliterates either the principal member if known to him through the written language *or the sound which he thinks he has heard,* in accordance with his own linguistic predilections ; this need not necessarily be, as we have already seen, the actual objective sound spoken in fact by the native speaker. Two examples பாகம் —pa:kam and பூசை —pu:cai were given above ; a few more typical examples are added below :

திண்டுக்கல் — Thin:t:ukkal, a town famous for its cigars,
= Dindigul, anglicised version.

சுப்பையா — cuppaiya, a proper name
= Subbiah, anglicised version in Madras
= Suppiah, anglicised version in Ceylon.

தரங்கம்பாடி — Tharangkampa:t:i, a coastal town
= Tranquebar, anglicised version.

Needless to say, any one who relies on these Sanskritized or anglicised versions for ascertaining the correct Tamil sound will be grossly misled. To a proper understanding of Tamil speech therefore, an appreciation of the phonemic character of the Tamil plosives and of the actual phonetic contexts in which the different allophones or subsidiary members of the phonemes are used is most essential.[15]

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[15] It is interesting to note that Scholars, who had studied the Tamil stops from a phonemic angle explicitly or by implication (e.g., Robert Caldwell, Alfred Master, T. Burrow, Daniel Jones and C. R. Sankaran), were of the opinion that the Tamil stops must have had the voiced, unvoiced and even fricative pronunciations at all times. On the other hand, scholars like F. B. J. Kuiper, Jules Bloch and Suniti Kumar Chatterji, who approached the problem from the narrow phonetic point of view, on the basis of Sanskritized or Prakritized versions of Tamil sounds —in any case an unreliable guide—arrived at the view that Tamil had voiced and unvoiced stops in its primitive stages, lost its voiced pronunciation some centuries after Christ (Kuiper dated it back to about 500 B.C., the Upanishad period) and finally regained its voiced as well as voiceless pronunciation in the 13th or 14th century A.D.

It is true that Chatterji states (vide his article appearing elsewhere in this issue) that the initial voiced and unvoiced stops were different phonemes in the pre-Sangam or pre-Tholkappiyam period but, as he has not quoted even a single pair of words in Tamil which were semantically distinguished only by the voiced and unvoiced initial stop, his argument fails to carry conviction.

Cilappadikaram, The Earliest Tamil Epic

Dr. A. CHIDAMBARANATHA CHETTIAR.

An epic has been defined as a narrative of length dealing with events of importance and grandeur. Its events and persons stimulate us because they enhance our faith in the worth of man's achievement and his nobility and dignity. Though Cilappadikaram consists of not more than five thousand lines of poetry, only half in length of Virgil's Aeneid, it is nevertheless a long poem and celebrates the great achievements of Kannaki (the heroine of the poem) and of a Pandya and a Chera king, who are to be regarded as the other heroes of the poem. Kannaki stands pre-eminent because she is represented as having emerged successful in the conflict with the Pandyan king, who admitted his guilt in ordering the death of her innocent husband wrongly convicted of theft. To her the gods render allegiance : the fire-god obeys her commands and swallows the city of Madurai, leaving unhurt such of those as she exempted ; the sun-god speaks to her in response to her pointing to the innocence of her husband ; the guardian angel of Madurai city (called Madura dēvi) treads before her with faltering steps, waits long to gain access to her and cajoles her into giving a hearing (Canto XXIII) ; the celestials under the lead of Indra descend from heaven, appear before her, show her her dead husband in flesh and blood and then escort her to heaven. She re-appears, after reaching heaven, to bless the Chera king, Senkuttuvan, who had consecrated a temple in her honour. She also forgives and blesses the Royal dynasty of the Pandya who had wronged her. In these achievements of hers, the poet Ilankō expresses the significance of human

achievements. Her essential nobility shines throughout the book. She could have quarrelled with her husband for having practically deserted her ; she could have cursed her rival Mathavi, who came in the way of her marital happiness ; she could have denied her husband access to her, when he often turned up for financial help. On the other hand, she gave him her anklets, the last of her jewels with a smile on her face, when she found he was in distress and in need of money, if only to please her rival, Mathavi. This gentle nature and nobility of her character have earned her everlasting fame. If Kannaki is not a heroine of the other type, winning wars and laurels, it is because at the time of composition of the epic, that is, the second century A.D. the Tamils had become a well-settled race, intent more on the arts of peace than of war. Moral courage, presence of mind, endurance under trying circumstances and desire to vindicate the honour of her husband are the distinguishing characteristics of this remarkable character.

The Pandya king, whose ideals of kingly honour and justice are so high that he actually collapses and dies on finding that he has been the instrument of a miscarriage of justice, deserves also to be regarded as a hero of the epic, even though his personal courage and prowess do not figure in the story. The circumstances in which he was placed misled him into a deviation from the normal course of justice, and in his anxiety to placate his queen he rashly ordered the execution of Kovalan (the husband of the heroine, Kannaki) on the basis of a false charge made by the real culprit but he does not think of the extenuating circumstances. Instead he is overwhelmed by his act of injustice and wills himself to death in order to save his honour. By thus sacrificing his life, he has won immortal glory. Here, again, we find man in his magnificence and nobility.

If a hero should surpass others in strength and courage, we find such a hero in Senkuttuvan, the Chera king. He

has the valour of Achilles; several are the battles he has already won. He has conquered many chieftains and won the battles with the other two great kings of the Tamil country, the Chola and the Pandya, whose seals he is using in token thereof. He has established friendly relations with "Nuttuvar Kannar" (the Sathakarnis) of the Central Provinces. He has also gone, as far as the Ganges and defied the might of the Northerners. Now, he again goes north and conquers the Aryan kings Visittira, Rudra, Bairava, Chitra, Singha, Sveta etc., and subjugates them. He captures Kanaka and Vijaya, sons of Balakumara (Canto XXVI), and after reaching his own capital, Vanchi, orders that the prisoners be taken to the other two Tamil kingdoms and exhibited before their sovereigns. A vain-glorious deed perhaps! The etiquette of war required that one should not pursue those that were fleeing, one should not capture those that were trying to escape. The Chola and Pandya kings, to whom the captives were shown, remarked that it was rather strange that Senkuttuvan should have made captives of persons fleeing for their lives after putting on the garb of ascetics. The fact was of course that most of those who fled had been spared and only a few who braved and gave battle were captured. The Pandya and the Chola, while apparently insinuating against the Chera king, were only indirectly praising his prowess which enabled him to bring mighty warriors as captives.

To the question whether Cilappadikaram is an oral or written epic, the answer is that it is largely written and only partially oral. A large number of verses in "Kānal vari", for instance, were probably a part of oral composition already existing, which, sung to the accompaniment of the musical instrument "Yāl", was familiar to many. (Cf. Canto VII 1.20 et.seq.). The verses, however, in "Aychiyar kuravai" (XVII) and "Kunra Kuravai" (XXIV) etc. were obviously the poet's own compositions and not collections of separate lays already existing.

Ilanko had a rich supply of stories, an important source of material for an epic poet. Witness for instance, the stories of Nala and Damayanti (XIV 1.50 et. seq.), Rama and Sita (XIV 11.46-49), Devasura war, Mahabharata war etc. (XXVI 11.236 et. seq.), of the Brahman who hid the treasure trove (XXI), of the Pandya who chopped off his right hand (XXIII), of the thieves who bolted away (XVI), of the monkey that was grateful (XV), of the Brahman lady who killed a mongoose (XV), of the seven chaste women of Puhar who wrought miracles (XXI) etc. These stories and episodes can be detached and enjoyed by themselves.

Ilanko was mainly a literary epic poet. He wrote for readers rather than hearers. He avoided stock phrases and embellished his poem by fashioning his words with care and artistry. It was customary to compare the gait of a woman to that of a swan and her speech to the voice of a parrot but Ilanko re-created these dead metaphors and introduced new life into his descriptions. (vide Canto II-11.38-80). Addressing Kannaki, his bride, Kovalan said, for instance, that the swans defeated by her gait tracked off in shame to hide themselves amidst the flower-beds in the fields and the parrots, though they found they were not her peers in the matter of speech, which had the sweetness of a lute and a flute and nectar all commingled, would not leave her hands in the hope that they would learn from her the secret of her speech charm.

Many are the ways in which Ilanko describes such familiar things as the approach of an evening or a dawn. Canto IV portrays the fall of an evening in Puhar, the Chola capital. There the poet shows how it caused pleasure to persons like Mathavi who were in the company of their lovers and how equally it was distressing to persons like Kannaki who had been separated from their husbands. The shepherds sing sweet notes on their flutes ; the beetles do so through the Mullai (November) buds ; the tender breeze spreads fine fragrance all round ; women with

sparkling ornaments light the lamps; the crescent moon, though young, dispels darkness even as the Pandya kings, though young, would annihilate their enemies. Thus the evening came, spreading sweetness among the lovers. To the lonely wives on the other hand who had been separated from their husbands, it brought only anguish; they discarded their pearls and sandal-paste and chose not to decorate their bed-chamber with flowers.

This is only one description of the onset of an evening. Other descriptions in the book show a pleasing variety in language. They occur in Cantos XIV (1.83 et. seq.), XXII, XXVII, and XXVIII; each has a distinctive splendour. The descriptions of dawn in Cantos XIII, XIV and XXVII are also remarkable for their grandeur.

Cilappadikaram appeals by its fine poetical texture, by its choice of apt and significant words, phrases and lines. The pauses and the stops, the play and counter-play of words found in Canto XVIII (Tunba malai 1. 8, 11, 24 etc., and 11. 9-10 and 11. 25-28) have a subtle effect of their own, which does not perhaps become evident until the second or subsequent reading. The wavering rhythms in which the poet couches the passages breaking the news of Kovalan's murder are also remarkable. Mention must also be made of the austere sublimities to which the poet rises in describing the omens and super-natural occurrences portending evil on the eve of the appearance of Kannaki at the Pandyan king's court. (Canto XX 11. 1-27).

Cilappadikaram is a Tamil epic composed in the second century A.D. and partakes of the characteristics of the Homeric epic in some respects and of the Virgilian epic in some others. The straight and simple way in which Kovalan confesses his faults, short-comings and misdeeds in the presence of his wife is comparable to Homer. Canto XVI (lines 57-70) is charged with the single emotion of Kovalan's repentance. Poetry cannot rise to nobler levels than in these vivid, expressive lines (especially 11. 63-70).

"How many vain days did I spend with worthless women, indulging in useless gossip and cavil! How have I belied the hopes and expectations of my parents! Alas! I heeded not their behests! Again, how much have I wronged you! What grief have I caused you!! I did not even pause to think it was unworthy of me to ask you to accompany me. 'Follow me', I said, and you came, my beloved one! What a noble act have you done!" There are probably few passages to equal this in any literature.

Just as Homer's characters keep to regular forms of address, Ilanko's courtiers, ministers, ambassadors and commanders adhere to the regular forms appropriate in the presence of a king. This is seen in the trial scene in Madurai Kandam, where the herald ushers in Kannaki and also in the scenes in Vanchi Kandam (the third part of the book).

In another respect also, Cilappadikaram resembles the Homeric epic. Kannaki dies not for the honour of society but for her own honour. True, she lives for others, as she lives for herself but when her husband is killed, she wants to join him in death and only postpones it till she vindicates his honour.

Light fun is provided in Canto XIV (Ur Kāṇ Kathai) in the accounts of men and women spending their time in sport and pastime. The descriptions of how they spend their morning, noon and evening remind us of Homer. In the accounts of gods such as those we find in Canto XI (Kādu Kāṇ Kathai) where a jungle deity tempts Kovalan, we have comic interludes. The whole of this canto is replete with an air of the supernatural.

This Tamil epic partakes also of the characteristics of the Virgilian epic. One of the heroes, Senkuttuvan is prepared to die not for his personal glory but for the honour of his land. When he was informed by a wandering minstrel that certain kings of the North had spoken in disparaging terms of the valour of Tamil kings, he gave

orders forthwith for a military expedition to the North, without waiting to verify, whether the insinuation pertained to him or to the other two Tamil kings, the Chola and the Pandya. An insult to any Tamil king was an insult to the entire Tamil nation and must be avenged by him. He led the expedition, prepared to fight for the glory of his country. In this sense, he was a national hero.

Ilanko's characters speak with variety. There are three dreams, one of Kannaki, another of Kovalan and a third of the Pandyan queen and each has a variety of its own, both in conception and import. There are again two epistles, both sent by Mathavi to Kovalan (Canto VIII and Canto XIII) but each has an individuality of its own. One is couched in a tone of remonstrance, while the other is written in a spirit of repentance, even though the purpose of both the epistles was to re-gain the love of Kovalan. Ilanko's art lay in skilful variation of even repetitive themes. The incident relating to the death of the Pandyan king and queen has to be repeatedly told in different settings but the artful way in which the poet mentions this in Cantos XX (77-81), XXV (11. 95-99), XV (11. 78-86), XXVIII (212-213), XXIX (1. 20) avoids monotony.

The artifice of employing synonyms to take away the tedium is also found in Ilanko. Take, for instance, the use of five different words in five lines to indicate the same object, viz., temple (Canto XIV—11. 7-11 : the words are koyil niyamam, nakaram, kottam, and palli). So also, in Canto X—11. 119-140, the words, othai, oli, pani, mankalam. pattu are used to denote a single meaning. Side by side with this, one meets with the employment of the same word, Koyil, five times in five successive lines in Canto V (11. 169-175) but one does not experience any monotony here, because of the otherwise sweet setting in which the word occurs.

Ilanko's style is ornate in places. A uniform clarity is not always aimed at by the poet and some passages are

intelligible only after repeated readings. We come across such passages, which nevertheless appeal to us by their poetical texture, in Canto XIII (11. 48 to 51) containing a pun on the word Mathavi, Canto XIII (11. 87-92) containing two epistles in one, Canto XIII (11. 184-188) containing a pun (cilēḍai) bearing on the words "Kannīr" (meaning tears and water from the plant) and "Kāl" (leg and wind), and Canto XIII (11. 151-170) describing the majestic flow of the river Vaiyai.

Cilappadikaram is Virgilian in character in another respect also. It contains a wide sweep of history, philosophy, religion and ethics. It contains accounts of the relationship between the Chola, the Pandya and the Chera kings of the Tamil country. It narrates how one king succeeded another in the Chola region and in the Pandya kingdom. (vide Canto XXVII Nirpadai—11. 118-123; ibid. 11. 159-171; ibid. 127-138). It points out that the Chola king was reckoned as the first and foremost citizen of the Chola state (Canto I—11. 31-32). It states how the Chera king Chenkuttuvan viewed kingship, how he wished to be loved by his subjects, how his sole desire was to bring happiness to them, how he scorned the idea of ever being cruel to them, how he regarded kingship as an office full of thorns but nevertheless a great opportunity given to him to serve the people. (vide Canto XXVI (Kāl Kōl) 11. 16-18; Canto XXV (Kāṭchi) 11. 100-104).

Philosophy is conveyed through the characters, Kaunthi Adigal and Madalan. Kaunthi Adigal says to Mankattu Brahman that it is not impossible for man to achieve anything under the sun if he is true unto himself and to the world, and if he loves his neighbours as he loves himself (Canto XI). Madalan exhorts King Chenkuttuvan to do acts of charity. "Youth is evanescent, wealth rotates, the body is mortal. The world is a stage, where we are actors; we pass from one birth to another just as actors change from one make-up to another. We will be judged only by our actions; we will receive

rewards or punishments according as we have done good things or evil. Do therefore good things, here and now " —. In these words he spoke to King Chenkuttuvan (Canto XXVIII—Naḍu Kal—11. 133-186).

Religious references to Sivan, Murugan, Vishnu, Kottavai (or Durga) and Argha abound in the work. Ethical passages occur frequently, especially towards the end of the work: " Do no harm to others; Realise the existence of God; Honour those who are devoted to God; Hate falsehood; Avoid backbiting; Neither kill nor eat flesh; give alms, do penance; Never be ungrateful; Despise friendship with the wicked; Never resort to perjury; follow the wise path " etc., etc. (Canto XXX (Varan taru) 11. 186-202). That the wise and the learned should forgive the unwise actions of misguided or ignorant people is brought out by the poet in his own inimitable style in Canto X (Nādu Kāṇ)—11. 237-238.

Yet another point of agreement between Ilanko and Virgil is in the avoidance of two extremes of being either too puritan or too frivolous in describing sexual pleasures. Ilanko is totally unlike Tiruttakadevar of the 9th century, who runs riot in describing the amorous adventures of Jeevaka, the hero of his work Jeevaka Chintamani. Nor does he think that love-making in literary works should be left to the Gods, who were free to transgress the limitations and obligations laid on man, as found in Kandapuranam and other Puranams of a later age. Like Spenser, he sang of ideal love. The love of Kannaki for Kovalan is highly idealised. Only, Mathavi comes in the way and Kovalan is captivated by her qualities of grace and attainments in dance and music. Mathavi, although born of a family of courtezans, is determined to lead a chaste life and shows an unwavering loyalty to Kovalan, even after he finally leaves her, to rejoin his wife. There is a sublimity in the love between Mathavi and Kovalan as described by the poet.

Just as Virgil bears the stamp of the Caesarean and the Augustan ages, Ilanko exemplifies a transitional stage in the development of the Tamil country; he stands between what is called the Sangam age when the pure, undefiled Tamil civilisation existed and the post-Sangam period which came to be engrossed more and more with matters religious, consequent on sectarian religious conflicts. Also like Virgil, Ilanko on the one hand glorifies the conquering spirit of the Tamils as pictured in the conquests of Chenkuttuvan, while on the other hand, through the words of Madalan addressed to Chenkuttuvan, he indicates the futility of mere military successes, when more important duties await the king.

Ilanko's heroes again are partly Homeric and partly Virgilian. Kannaki's revenge on the citizens of Madurai for an unjust act committed by their king is not an example to be followed. But her ideals of true love, fortitude and courage stand out prominently, as worthy of admiration and emulation. As Dryden says, the design of an epic is to form the mind to heroic virtue by example. Under circumstances similar to those which happened to Kannaki, some women would have paid unkindness with unkindness, some would have retaliated against their husbands and some would have deserted the home of their husbands when forsaken. But Kannaki was of a different mettle and chose a more difficult course of action; hence she is remembered by posterity.

Romance and supernatural elements also find a place in the epic. There are fabulous and incredible elements of wonderland in Canto XI (Kadu Kan). The underground passages and corridors alluded to by Varottamai read like a romance. Ilanko makes this account both fantastic and lively. The episode of Vana dēvathai, trying to seduce Kovalan, is delightful, though at the supernatural level. We are reminded of Homer's elements of the Fairyland and Virgil's transformation of Aenea's ships into nymphs, when we read the account of a mischievous,

misguided couple being turned into jackals by the curse of Kaunti Adigal, who could not bear the insult offered to her companions Kovalan and Kannaki.

It is interesting to note that Ilanko, like Milton, never applies sardonic humour to his main characters. He has nothing but praise for Kannaki, the chief heroine of the epic. Kaunthi Adigal, the ascetic and Mathari, the shepherdess praise her as an example to be followed by other women. The Pandyan Queen praises her, the Chera Queen deems her fit to be worshipped, the sun-god and fire-god do her errands, the Chola king Karikalan, King Gajabahu of Ceylon and other kings assemble and do homage to her image and all through the epic the poet has avoided the ludicrous in depicting her. (See also Canto XXII (Alar padu) ll. 134-136, where even her action in burning the city is justified by certain women of Madurai). Friends of Kannaki and of her foster-mother all praise her and the ideal for which she lived (vide Canto XXIX).

Ilanko draws several morals from the events of his epic : that an unjust ruler is inevitably punished, that a chaste woman receives the homage of all, human beings and celestials ; that no man can escape his fate. Besides, many a lesson he has left the reader to draw indirectly, e.g., one should not indulge in gossip, one should take great care of trust property ; one should be brave and never despondent ; one should have faith in God. Ilanko apparently thought that poetry was intended not merely to beguile one's leisure but it should inspire and instruct. All in all, Ilanko has achieved unqualified success as a poet and takes a high rank among the epic poets of the world.

In later periods, poets like Tiruttakadevar, Sekkilar and Kambar attempted to copy it and even rival it, but throughout the centuries it has maintained a central place in Tamil literature. It has an unparalleled variety of appeal and deserves to hold a high place not only in Tamil literature but also in world literature.

Reviews

THE SANSKRIT LANGUAGE

By

T. BURROW

[*Publishers* : Faber and Faber, London.
Pages 426. Price : fifty-five (55) shillings net.]

This book is the latest of a series on the "Great Languages" of which Prof. L. R. Palmer of Oxford is the General Editor. Those who have seen other books of the series will welcome this latest addition to the series by the Boden Professor of Sanskrit in the University of Oxford, Prof. T. Burrow. In Prof. Burrow's work, the Sanskrit language lives as the great connecting link of the Indo-European family of languages. Professor Burrow writes clearly and lucidly in a language which even the layman can understand. Prof. Burrow shows Central Europe to be the home of the Indo-European family of languages, and the book ought to be of special interest to students of comparative Philology in India in that it shows how important are Latin and Greek for the comparative language study of Sanskrit. Comparative Philology in India has tended to neglect Latin and Greek in its studies.

The author traces the history of Sanskrit from its earliest times and devotes the main portion of his work to the two-thousand year period during which Sanskrit was a powerful factor in religion, philosophy and culture. To readers of this review, chapter the eighth on the "Non-Aryan influence on Sanskrit" will be of especial interest. In this chapter, the author traces the loan words which

entered Sanskrit from the different languages with which Sanskrit came into contact, and enumerates a list of words which are certainly of Austro-Asiatic and Dravidian origin.

"More work has been done on the influence of Dravidian on Sanskrit and more abundant results have been achieved. It has become clear that quite a considerable portion of the Sanskrit vocabulary is of Dravidian origin, and that this influence has operated over a long period in the history of the language". Professor Burrow gives a list of about 150 words which are "the most important and certain of the Dravidian loans" (p. 380). In this list are words which many sanskritists in India believe to be of Indo-Aryan origin but which Prof. Burrow shows are definitely or Dravidian origin—e.g.,

> aguru, anala, eda, katu, kākā, kunda, kundala, khala, candana, tuvara, danda, nira, bala (strength), mayūra, mallika, mālā, mina.

Prof. Burrow concludes "It is evident from this survey that the main influence of Dravidian on Indo-Aryan was concentrated at a particular historical period, namely between the late Vedic period and the formation of the classical language. This is significant from the point of view of the locality where the influence took place. It is not possible that at this period such influence could have been exercised by the Dravidian languages of the South. There were no intensive contacts with South India before the Maurya period by which time the majority of these words had already been adopted by Indo-Aryan".

Professor Burrow has through his book brought Sanskrit India closer to the West, and we await his works which will make Dravidian and Tamil India better known in England and the English-speaking world.

THE EVOLUTION OF A MAN

By

FR. M. HERMANNS

[*Publishers* : Society of St. Paul, Allahabad. Pages 139. Price Rs. 3/8.]

The shortcomings of the Darwinian theory of Evolution have already been exposed by several writers. In this handsomely published book the author challenges the validity of the theory on the basis of Human Biogenetics, Anthropology, Pre-history and Palaeontology. Fr. Hermanns is concerned in particular with attacking Atheistic Evolution which is the backbone of the Communist world view. However, it is one thing to question the validity of the hypothesis that inorganic matter could evolve into organic cells, and quite a different thing to assert that the first man was created by a Supreme Being. More convincing is the author's thesis that man is not descended from the ape since man alone developes the powers of speech and thought as well as spirituality. While the author admirably marshals the weakness of Darwinism, his own positive explanation of the evolution of man transcends the limit of science and touches the realm of Faith. It is doubtful whether such an approach would satisfy the scientist. The inescapable truth remains that Darwinism is retained despite its weakness, because scientists have found nothing more satisfactory to put in its place.

News and Notes

ALL-INDIA ORIENTAL CONFERENCE

The 18th session of the All-India Oriental Conference was held at Annamalainagar on the 26th, 27th and 28th December, 1955. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, Vice-President of India, presided over the conference.

In his welcome address, Mr. T. M. Narayanaswamy Pillai, Vice-Chancellor, Annamalai University, *inter alia* said :

> 'This University desires to do for Tamil what the Deccan College and the Bhandarkar Institute are doing at Poona for Sanskrit. You may be glad to know that with the help of the Union Government to which we are grateful, this University, in commemoration of its Silver Jubilee, has created a Chair for Dravidian Philology, and the compilation of a new Etymological Dictionary. As Sir William Hunter has observed, " The perfect understanding of the structure of the Dravidian languages will revolutionise our knowledge in regard to linguistics in general." With the help of the Union and State Governments it is proposed to develop this into an Institute of research in and the study of comparative Dravidian Philology........
>
> Our National Government has rightly addressed itself to the task of developing all the national languages mentioned in the Constitution. I do believe that one of the results of our independence and freedom must be to develop all our national languages. The creation of regimented unity by improving one language throughout this sub-continent is likely to do more harm than good.'

Referring to Archaeology in South India he said :

> 'I may, however, say that this conference should urge upon the Government the duty of paying more atten-

tion to the excavations and to the study and publication of inscriptions. There are many places in South India, where excavations are likely to yield good results. I should like to mention in particular Kaverippoompattinam, now submerged in the sea, but once the flourishing capital of a great kingdom, a place associated with two of the great Tamil Classics, Silappathikaram and Manimekhalai. Marine Archeology has proved very valuable in the Mediterranean Region. The publication of inscriptions, so far made, is not enough and indicates possibly a want of proper appreciation of its importance.'

The Presidential addresses of Professors R. P. Sethu Pillai and T.P. Meenakshisundaram Pillai, as Presidents of the Dravidian and Tamil Sections respectively of the conference, appear elsewhere in this number.

RETENTION OF ENGLISH

APPEAL BY MADRAS LEADERS

A Press Note issued by the Correspondent, Union Language Convention, Tamilakam, refers to the resolution passed at a meeting of prominent leaders of Madras State held on January 28, urging the continuation of English as the official language of the Government of India, and the language for communication between the Union and State Governments. The note says :

"On the issue of what the Union and Inter-State official language should be, leaders belonging to various schools of thought met together on January 28, upon the initiative of the Academy of Tamil Culture, a non-political organisation, and decided after a full and frank discussion that the following resolution should be communicated to the Chairman of the Official Language Commission, the Prime Minister of India and the Government of Madras. The resolution represents the unanimous opinion of all those who met as above stated. The resolution does not cover the issue of what the State official language should be nor does it cover the important issue of the medium of instruction. These matters

were kept distinct inasmuch as they have to be governed by totally other considerations and should not be mixed up with this issue.

The resolution said : "In view of the unquestioned fact that all the educated citizens of India who are qualified to enter public services to-day in all the States and territories comprised in the Indian Union have an adequate knowledge of English, and in view of the fact that no other single language enjoys this position, no question of pride or prejudice should prevail against the obviously necessary and just solution of the problem, viz., that English should continue to be the official language of the Union and the language for communication between the Union and the State Governments and between one State Government and another.

UTILITY OF ENGLISH

"This conclusion is strengthened by the fact that English must and will continue as a part of the educational curriculum of the country on account of its utility in international intercourse and for the purpose of utilising the growing modern knowledge of the world.

"We are of the view that it will be grossly unjust to make any other language take the place of English, when to a population of about a hundred million, living in a contiguous territory in the South, it would be a language with which for all practical purposes they are totally unacquainted.

"We do not wish to be misunderstood as standing in the way of the natural progress of any language for the purposes of social and business intercourse throughout India."

Mr. A. Subbiah was also authorised to communicate the resolution to all the Madras Members in the Union Parliament, to the Chief Ministers of Bengal, Andhra, Mysore and T.-C. States and to such other important persons and institutions as he may think fit.

SIGNATORIES TO RESOLUTION

The following are signatories to the resolution: Mr. C. Rajagopalachari, Mr. E. V. Ramaswami Periyar, Leader, Dravida Kazhagam, Mr. P. T. Rajan, M.L.A., Leader, Justice Party, Rajah Sir M. A. Muthiah Chettiar, Pro-Chancellor, Annamalai University, Mr. C. N. Annadurai, Leader, Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, Mr. R. Nedunchezhiyan, General Secretary, Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, Mr. S. Swayamprakasam, Leader, Dravidian Parliamentary Party, Mr. S. G. Manavalaramanujam, former Vice-Chancellor, Annamalai University, Mr. T. M. Krishnaswami Aiyar, former Chief Justice, T.-C. State; Mr. M. P. Sivagnanam, Leader, Tamilarasu Kazhagam, Mr. A. Ratnam, M.L.A., President, Tamil Nad Scheduled Castes Federation, Mr. S. R. Venkataraman, Secretary, Servants of India Society, Mr. K. A. P. Viswanathan, Secretary, Tamil Peravai, Mr. R. P. Sethu Pillai, Professor of Tamil, University of Madras, Dr. M. Varadarajan, Professor of Tamil, Pachiappa's College, Mr. V. S. Tyagaraja Mudaliar, prominent land-owner and industrialist, Mr. M. P. Somasundaram, Editor, *Kalki*, Mr. C. Amritaganesa Mudaliar, Hon. Secretary, Red Cross Society, Dr. A. Srinivasan, M.L.C., and Mr. A. Subbiah (Convenor and Correspondent).

—*Hindu, Jan.* 31, 1956.

APPEAL BY CHIEF MINISTER, MYSORE.

" To cry, hoarse against English is a kind of fanaticism," declared Mysore's Chief Minister, Mr. K. Hanumanthaiya in the State Assembly, while replying to the debate on the Appropriation Bill.

He said English had not only " taught us science and technological knowledge, but also tenets of democracy."

Mr. Hanumanthaiya stated that Hindi should not be forced on Mysore and other South Indian States. If Hindi

was forced on non-Hindi States it was the "surest way of endangering Indian unity."

He was certain that while taking a decision, the Government of India would do all necessary things to maintain the unity of the country and not allow "Hindi enthusiasts" to break the unity, he added.

—*Mail, March* 30, 1956.

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Transliteration of Tamil Phonemes* into English

VOWELS

அ	—	a	(as in among)
ஆ	—	a:	(,, calm)
இ	—	i	(,, sit)
ஈ	—	i:	(,, machine)
உ	—	u	(,, full)
ஊ	—	u:	(,, rule)
எ	—	e	(,, fed)
ஏ	—	e:	(,, able)
ஐ	—	ai	(,, aisle)
ஒ	—	o	(,, opinion)
ஓ	—	o:	(,, opium)
ஔ	—	au	(,, now)

CONSONANTS

				Hints re: articulation
Hard[1] (Plosive)	க	—	k	(as in king, angle, alhambra)
	ச	—	c	(,, church, angel, calcium)
	ட	—	t:	(,, card ?)....Retroflex - articulate with **blade** of tongue.
	த	—	th	(,, threat, this, thick)....dental.
	ப	—	p	(,, pipe, amber)
	ற	—	t	(,, atlas, sunday, arrears)..Retroflex-articulate with **tip** of tongue.
Soft (Nasal)	ங	—	ng	(,, sing)....velar n
	ஞ	—	nj	(,, angel)....palatal n
	ண	—	n:	(,, urn ?)....Retroflex n - articulate with **blade** of tongue.
	ந	—	nh	(,, anthem)....dental n
	ம	—	m	(,, mate)
	ன	—	n	(,, enter)....Retroflex n - articulate with **tip** of tongue.
Medium (non-nasal continuant)	ய	—	y	(,, yard)
	ர	—	r	(,, red)
	ல	—	l	(,, leave)....Alveolar l - articulate with **tip** of tongue.
	வ	—	v	(,, very)
	ழ	—	l-	(,, ?)....Retroflex l - articulate with **blade** of tongue.
	ள	—	l:	(,, hurl)....Alveolar l - articulate with **blade** of tongue.
Auxiliary[2] (ஆய்தம்)	ஃ	—	x	(,, ahead)

* The Tamil phonemes may for practical purposes be treated as having single allophones only, except in the case of the hard consonants which have four allophones each, as shown in note 1 on the reverse.

1. The Phonemes, classified as *hard*, have normally an *unaspirated, unvoiced* value but acquire the following modified values if preceded by a consonant:—

   (a) a *slightly aspirated* unvoiced value, if preceded by a *plosive or hard consonant.*

   e.g., பக்கம் – is pronounced pakkham, not pakkam

   (b) an unaspirated but *voiced* value, if preceded by a *nasal or soft consonant*:—

   e.g., பங்கம் – is pronounced pangam, not pankam
   பஞ்சம் – „ panjam, not pancam,

   (c) a *fricative* value if preceded by a *non-nasal continuant or medium consonant or by the auxiliary consonant.*

   e.g., பல்கலை becomes palhalai not palkalai
   எஃகு „ ehhu not exku

NOTE.—In most present day dialects, the plosive assumes a fricative —sometimes a voiced—value after a vowel also, except in the case of t: which retains its normal unaspirated, unvoiced value even after a vowel

2. The value of this *auxiliary* phoneme, which must *always* be followed by a hard consonant, was variable during the time of Tholkappiam; it acquired a phonetic value identical with that of the following hard consonant, vide 1 (c) above,

   e.g., எஃகு became ehhu

   Later its value became fixed as h, irrespective of the following consonant.

Note (i) With a view to keep down transliteration to the minimum it is suggested that, in the case of Tamil words which are already in free use in English (e.g., Tamil = Thamil), or where it is unnecessary to indicate the exact pronunciation, accurate transliteration need not be resorted to. In the case of proper names etc., which occur more than once in the same article, the transliteration need be shown only once in brackets side by side with a free English adaptation, the latter alone being used subsequently, except of course in cases where such a procedure will lead to ambiguity,

e.g., வேங்கடம் = Vengadam (Ve : ngkat : am).

(ii) Reference may be made to *Tamil Culture*, Vol. IV, No. 1 (January 1955 issue) pp. 58-73 for fuller details.

THE TAMIL SCRIPT

(This table is given for the guidance of those who wish to read Tamil texts which often appear in TAMIL CULTURE)

Vowels	Vowel symbols attached to preceding consonant.	Hard consonants						Soft consonants						Medium consonants					
		k	c	t:	th	p	t	ng	nj	n:	nh	m	n	y	r	l	v	l-	l:
அ a	nil	க	ச	ட	த	ப	ற	ங	ஞ	ண	ந	ம	ன	ய	ர	ல	வ	ழ	ள
ஆ a:	ா to the right of the consonant	கா					றா			ணா			னா						
இ i	ி to be *joined* at the top—right of consonant	கி																	
ஈ i:	ீ to be *joined* at the top—right of consonant	கீ																	
உ u	a semi-circle ு, a vertical stroke | or a loop ு to be *joined* to the bottom	கு	சு	டு	து	பு	று	ஙு	ஞு	ணு	நு	மு	னு	யு	ரு	லு	வு	ழு	ளு
ஊ u:	Same as for u, but with an additional stroke or loop	கூ	சூ	டூ	தூ	பூ	றூ	ஙூ	ஞூ	ணூ	நூ	மூ	னூ	யூ	ரூ	லூ	வூ	ழூ	ளூ
எ e	ெ to the left of the consonant	கெ																	
ஏ e:	ே to the left of the consonant	கே																	
ஐ ai	ை to the left of the consonant	கை								ணை			னை			லை			ளை
ஒ o	ெ to the left & ா to the right of the consonant	கொ					றொ			ணொ			னொ						
ஓ o:	ே to the left & ா to the right	கோ					றோ			ணோ			னோ						
ஔ au	ெ to the left & ள to the right	கௌ																	
மெய் pure consonants	A dot · on the top of the consonant	க்			த்														

Note.—(1) The vowels are written as shown in the first vertical column.

(2) The consonants are written as shown in the horizontal columns, with a symbol or symbols indicating the vowel immediately following. A consonant followed by the vowel அ (a) has no symbol, while the pure consonant not followed by a vowel has a dot on top.

(3) All the eighteen vowel consonants under க (k) are shown as a guide; in other cases only the irregular forms are shown, the rest being exactly similar to those shown under க (k), excepting for trivial differences in a few cases which might safely be ignored.

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The expression of individual views by contributors or reviewers does not imply editorial endorsement.

Published by Dr. M. Varadarajan for Academy of Tamil Culture, Thamilakam, Sterling Road, Madras-31, and printed by K. S. S. Rajan at The Jupiter Press Private Ltd., 109-C, Mount Road, Madras-18.